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MAKING WAY FOR THE MAIL.

LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen
1869.

THE COACHING AGE

BY

STANLEY HARRIS
('*AN OLD STAGER*'),
AUTHOR OF 'OLD COACHING DAYS.'

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN STURGESS.

(Dedicated by permission to the Road Club.)

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.
1885.
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PREFACE.

The favourable reception accorded to my book on 'Old Coaching Days' has emboldened me, in the phraseology of the road, to put on another coach, and ask for it the same kind indulgence and patronage as were bestowed on my previous undertaking.

It has been my endeavour on this occasion to add to many of the facts and circumstances narrated in 'Old Coaching Days,' thus rendering it more complete; and a great deal of useful, and I hope interesting information will be found in the following pages.

Setting out with our old Highways, some of which were partially used by coaches, I have proceeded to show how our roads were improved, and the results of such improvement as regarded increased speed in travelling; then, giving some account of the use that was made of the roads, and the various persons who managed the traffic on them, I have gone on

to 'the change,' when railways superseded the coaching system, and thus brought me into the position of being a chronicler of reminiscences of past things which can no longer be seen in actual existence.

I have to thank the editors of the *Field* and *Land and Water*, for permission kindly granted me to reprint some of my contributions to their papers.

Having now filled up 'the way-bill,' it only remains to start the concern, which, as before, is worked by

AN OLD STAGER.

1884.

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THE COACHING AGE.

THE START.

We are removed now by some one or two generations from the palmy days of coaching. Such names as Pears, of the Southampton Coach; Charlie Holmes, of the Blenheim; and Vaughan, of the Cambridge 'Telegraph,' have faded from memory, though there was a time when to ride alongside them was a red-letter day to the happy occupant of the box-seat. Lord William Lennox tells us that 'coaches were introduced into England by the Earl of Arundel in 1580, before which time Queen Elizabeth, on public occasions, rode behind her chamberlain.' That grand Queen, who associated herself with England's glory, thought coaches effeminate, and yielded with reluctance to the innovation.

Even after the Civil Wars were closed, and old Oliver was at rest, coaching had made little progress.

It was thought a great thing to get to London in two days by a coach which left Oxford for the capital. This eventful journey was broken at Beaconsfield. We can imagine how, in fine weather, the country must have been enjoyed, for progress must have been at the rate of two or three miles an hour, and ample time was afforded for mingling riding with walking. In much later times it took four days to reach the capital from York.

Between this period and the Regency, progress in coaching was slow; the roads were bad, and highway robbery was frequent. In Horace Walpole's time robbery on the road had become so general, that he wrote that if squires did not leave off shooting partridges and take to shooting highwaymen, society would be dissolved. Towards the close of Walpole's life, a Mr. John Palmer effected great reforms; and after his time other improvements followed, which were rendered possible by the labours of Telford and the system of McAdam. In 1784 a coach reached London from Bristol in one day, taking sixteen hours for the journey, or fourteen hours from Bath. In 1836, however, the Bath coach took only eleven hours to reach London.

It was not, indeed, until George IV. was King that stage-coaches approached perfection. Their career, however, in this stage, though perfect, was brief,

amounting only to about twenty years, from 1820 to 1840. Perhaps the year 1836, which witnessed the publication of 'Pickwick,' wherein there is so rich a picture of the old coaching days, was the culminating point of the mail-coach system. Just as it was perfected, apparently, it was rendered useless; the railway guard supplanted the stage-coach guard, and the driver of an engine took the place of that potentate of coaching days, the driver of the mail-coach.

The speed of some of the principal mail-coaches at their finest period was not less than ten miles an hour, and this was in many cases, and in particular parts of the country, exceeded. The punctuality of Mr. Taylor's coach, 'The Wonder,' from Shrewsbury, was so great that Lord William Lennox tells us that many people at St. Albans regulated their watches by that coach as it entered the town. This was turning the tables upon Time, and regulating him instead of being regulated by him.

Only once have we to record that 'The Wonder' was beaten. The author of 'Down the Road' tells how the Hon. Thomas Kenyon was driven by enterprising postboys in trim blue jackets, ahead of 'The Wonder' all the way from Shrewsbury to London.

'Dick,' said his honour, standing outside the Lion at Shrewsbury, 'I wonder whether I could beat "The

Wonder" into town? I should like to do it if I can!'

'Very good, your honour; I'll do my best!' and he did, and Mr. Kenyon got to London first.

This famous coach, established in 1825, kept its celebrity for punctuality and speed for thirteen years. It was the first coach which undertook so long a journey as 158 miles in one day.

The box-seat in those days was a seat of honour: in a good, stout double-breasted coat, and with a good whip to handle the ribbons by your side, with rattling-bars, and with fair weather and a fine country, what could be more delightful! Instead of tunnels and cuttings we had hills and dales; one saw the country and its inhabitants. The driver of a coach had his privileges in those days, as the following story, told by Lord William Lennox, will show:

'When we stopped to change horses at Slough, I saw the faithless Lothario [the coachman's wife had given him a bunch of violets at starting] present the pretty barmaid of the Red Lion with the bunch of violets, which she placed near her heart. Nay, more, if my optics did not deceive me, he implanted a kiss on the rosy lips of the blooming landlady, who faintly exclaimed, "For shame, you naughty man!"'

All this shows the bright side of coach-travelling; but there is another picture, and one equally true.

The outside of a coach in mid-winter, with darkness and cold mist such as eats into the very marrow, or with biting wind or pitiless continuous rain, is not pleasant, and is well exchanged for the inside of a railway carriage. What avails scenery when you can only discern the horses' heads through mist by aid of the coach-lamps? Though, when the air was steady, the night bright, and the roads firm, life on the box was not undesirable. The little villages, with lights shining through the diamond panes of the cottages, the odd weird shape of the trees, the interchange of conversation at any stoppage, were pleasant things enough.

'Eh, mon tod, it's a braw fine night,
The wind's in the west, and the moon shines bright!'

Well can we remember, too, sundry hotels famous for particular dishes, and how daintily Mrs. Lewis of the Lion, at Shrewsbury, prepared the mushrooms for the rump-steak. Well, too, can we recall the monster hearth and fire at Farnborough, where, at first unable to find our fingers to unbutton our coats, we broke in, half frozen, on the lazy discussion by some village boors of Farmer Jackson's crops, and how the 'frostes' were affecting agricultural prospects.

How one wishes that John Leech had sketched for

us some of the incidents of the 1820-40 period, as he has so admirably depicted the sporting life of his time, and the manners and customs of the early Victorian era! He could be humorous without being vulgar, delicate without being weak, satirical without being sardonic. Never was power wielded with more grace before or since his pencil went to work.

In the 'Annals of the Road' are some excellent descriptions of well-known coachmen. From their association with every class, they derived a good knowledge of human nature. They heard and retailed an immense fund of good stories. The best coachman was not always found with the best horses; some of the cleverest had to take cripples in hand, and show their skill and perseverance in surmounting difficulties. In fact, driving is an art which has to be learnt. Peter Pry's description of the celebrated Cartwright* is admirable. We are made to see the man before us, with his well-held reins and well-poised whip, and his marvellous management of his leaders. Nearly as good is his account of Leech's team from Barnby Moor to Rossetter Bridge, with four bay blood mares.

In 1836-7 people frequented the great yards from which started the mails, east, west, north and south—

* See Malet's 'Annals of the Road,' pp. 71-73.

The Swan with Two Necks, The Bull and Mouth, and other similar yards; or they would await at Hyde Park Corner the mails going out of London by that route. What finer spectacle could be viewed than one of these Royal Mails, in full trim, with a fine team of four greys, both leaders carrying bar, and up to their bits, coach properly laden in and out, sometimes driven by some crack dragsman, with guard all in red and gold, and with his great tin horn at right angles with the mail, as he raises it to blow a cheery blast? The four-horse drags in Hyde Park are nothing to this. We know they come out for a drive, and will go in again; but here, on a December evening, snow slightly falling, we saw in imagination this down mail encountering a thousand difficulties—we pictured her as perhaps snowed up, or gallantly fighting her way through to her destination. The passengers we envied and held in respect, the outsiders wrapped up in the greatcoats with capes, the insiders closely packed, and their breath already frozen on the window-panes.

Ah! those were halcyon days. How has De Quincey painted them for us! Who that has read his 'The English Mail-Coach,' can forget his thrilling picture of the mail carrying through the country the news of the victory of Talavera? Englishmen had not in those days been made effeminate by a sentimental policy,

and thought it right to bring a just cause to the arbitrament of arms. Turning our backs on Boers was not to the fancy of John Bull then, and the result was that law was respected, which in these latter days is despised; so that we have even lived to see a Prime Minister of England point to an outrage as a reason for legislation, with the natural result that all over the world lawlessness has gained a step upon law.

In the period we are speaking of this was not so, and when De Quincey, fired with the glory of motion, wrote his famous paper, England was loyal to the backbone, and united as, alas! we cannot now say she is. 'England,' says De Quincey, 'owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy.' Long may this be true, and yet again may she triumph over the disloyal and dishonest, who are aiming to destroy the Monarchy and House of Lords, and repeat the errors of the Great Rebellion!

The *Courier* was the great evening paper at the time of Talavera, and as the mail went through towns and villages the guard and passengers would unfold the paper and point with exultation to the words in large letters, 'GLORIOUS VICTORY!' The ensigns of triumph, too, were at once recognised—laurel, oak-leaves, and ribbons; and as the mail entered

each town it brought rapture with it, and every living creature connected with it, from coachman and guard to passenger and horse, was held for the time to be a sharer in the victory.

We cannot resist concluding this chapter with the following extract from De Quincey's spirited account of the night when the news of a Peninsular victory was carried throughout England:

'The night before us is a night of VICTORY. . . . The guards, as being officially his Majesty's servants, and the coachmen, such as are within the privilege of the Post Office, wear the royal liveries of course; and as it is summer, they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of laurel in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such, except by dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory connects every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood. The spectators, numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are

shouted along by the Post Office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen—expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiations of its separate missions. Every moment you heard the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! Can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir! what a thundering of wheels! what a trampling of hoofs! what a sounding of trumpets! what farewell cheers! what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulations, connecting the name of the particular mail—"Liverpool for ever!" with the name of the particular victory. "Badajoz for ever!" or "Salamanca for ever!"

'The half-slumbering consciousness that all night long and all the next day—perhaps for even a longer period—many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect

of multiplying the victory itself. . . . A fiery arrow seems to be let loose northwards, for six hundred miles. Liberated from the embarrassments of the city . . . we soon begin to enter upon our natural pace. . . . Heads of every age crowd to the windows, young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols, and rolling volleys of sympathizing cheers run along with us, behind us, and before us.'

This is an extract only where all is worth reading. The progress through the provinces, the adventures on the road, the grand and pathetic story of the 23rd Dragoons, these must be sought in De Quincey's work itself.

CHAPTER I.

OUR HIGHWAYS.

THERE is an old saying that 'the first step in civilization is to make roads, the second to make more roads, and the third to make more roads still.'

The construction and maintenance of cross roads or parish highways as distinguished from turnpike roads has from time to time formed the subject of legislative enactments ever since the reign of Philip and Mary, when the foundation was laid of the general system on which the highways have been managed, until the recent introduction of highway boards.

The Act of Philip and Mary directed that road surveyors should be chosen by the inhabitants in vestry every year, and that the inhabitants should be bound to provide labour, carriages, etc., for a certain number of days in each year for maintaining and repairing the roads. Hence arose what was afterwards ordinarily known as 'Statute labour,' which was performed by farmers and persons keeping horses

and carts, under the direction of the parish surveyors, and was given in lieu of payment of rates in money by those doing the work.

It would seem from the somewhat methodical basis on which the maintenance of the highways was thus established that they should thenceforth have been kept in a decent state. Such, however, was far from being the case, and even the turnpike or main roads were long after this period in such a condition as to be scarcely passable, as we may learn from accounts of the journeys performed even by royalty; though some efforts were made to improve them when a royal progress was about to be made along them, according to an entry made in an old account-book in the parish of Kingston in Surrey, in the year 1599, which runs thus: 'Paid for mending the wayes when the Queen went from Wimbledon to Nonsuch, 20d.' What repair was done for the trifling sum expended does not appear. The road from Hatfield to Reading—a distance of fifty-six miles, all comprised in one trust—is said to have been constructed principally for Queen Elizabeth's use.

Again, in 1703, when Prince George of Denmark went from Windsor to Petworth, he was fourteen hours going forty miles, the last nine of which occupied six hours; while, in 1727, George II. and his Queen were a whole night travelling from Kew

Palace to St. James's, being once overturned. Thus even royal personages were not exempt from the discomforts and dangers of travelling on the roads owing to the wretched condition in which they were kept.

It is scarcely necessary, perhaps, to mention that such an important national subject as constructing and maintaining efficient means of transit throughout the kingdom frequently rendered Parliamentary intervention indispensable ; and hence the number of Highway Acts which were passed (independently of Turnpike Acts) up to the reign of William IV., when a General Highway Act was passed, superseding all previous ones, and providing a number of details with respect to the accounts, offences and nuisances on the highways, etc., adopting, however, the existing principle of the annual appointment of road surveyors by the inhabitants in vestry, raising the necessary funds by means of rates, and the employment of Statute labour as a composition in lieu of money payments.

The maintenance of the highways was kept tolerably distinct from that of the turnpike roads, which were managed by commissioners or trustees under the provisions of the General Turnpike Act, passed in the reign of George IV., and the numerous local Acts referring to the various roads throughout the kingdom.

The revenues of the turnpike trustees were mainly dependent upon the amount of the tolls received, that of the road surveyors being from the rates made by themselves, but having to be allowed by two magistrates. Before, however, the rates were formally made out and submitted to the magistrates, the rate of assessment in the pound was discussed and settled in vestry; the surveyor, very much after the manner of a Chancellor of the Exchequer laying his Budget before the House of Commons, submitting to the vestry estimates of the sums required for labour and materials and all other incidental disbursements.

As a matter of course, warm—indeed, very warm, even hot—discussions and differences arose in the vestries when questions of taxation of the ratepayers came before them, particularly as many persons in small country villages, who kept no sort of conveyance or animal, had an idea that they ought not to be called on to pay highway rates; never, as they argued, using the roads. It is really surprising to what an extent this notion prevailed, and it was consequently by no means an unusual thing to hear persons, summoned before a bench of magistrates for non-payment of a highway rate, urge it as a reason for entire exemption from the impost. They seemed oblivious of the fact that the butchers', bakers', and grocers' carts, together with those conveying goods of

other descriptions, must travel along the roads into the village for the purpose of bringing them the necessaries of life.

They were also probably unaware that, although tolls were levied for the maintenance of the turnpike roads, the inhabitants of every parish were bound by the common law of the land to maintain the roads passing through their respective parishes; indeed, one of the Judges of the King's Bench stated that the obligation to maintain all public roads was public, and in the nature of a tax; that it was their share of the public burden which those districts had to pay, and which was imposed for the general benefit of the community, and tolls were an additional tax for the same purpose; that no principle of common law was more clearly recognised than that which attached to parishes the liability to repair all highways within their respective boundaries, and such liability could not be avoided, unless the charge was fixed by the clearest evidence; that it was a mistake to suppose that the object of Turnpike Acts was to relieve parishes and townships from the burden of repairing highways, their object being to improve roads for the general benefit of the public by imposing a pecuniary tax in addition to the means already provided by law for that purpose.

In the event of a highway being very much out of

repair, or in a dangerous state, the inhabitants of the parish were liable to be indicted, and then, perhaps, in addition to their ordinary highway rates, they would have to pay all the fines and penalties arising from the neglect of their obligation to keep their road in proper condition.

The chief distinction between highways and turnpike roads was the payment of toll on the latter for the purpose of their maintenance. The turnpike roads were generally what are known as 'main roads,' being on the principal thoroughfares from one town to another, and where there was sufficient traffic passing to pay the expenses of keeping turnpike-gate men, repairing the road, etc., out of the tolls collected. In the ordinary country roads and lanes through villages off the main roads, the only means of raising the requisite funds for repair necessarily was by rates and, as above mentioned, Statute labour, which, however, was in fact only another mode of paying the rate by composition in kind.

That the amount raised annually for the maintenance of the highways was a very important element in the taxation of occupiers and owners of property subject to the payment of highway rates, is obvious from the circumstance that little more than forty years since the length of parish highways was about 104,770 miles, and the expense of maintenance

averaged about £11 3s. per mile a year. That the whole of the sums levied under the denomination of highway rates was not strictly applied to the purpose specified is manifest from the fact of its sometimes being applied in aid of the poor rate and some other objects, of which I will give instances, as also from the administration of the fund being entrusted to persons, as surveyors, who were inefficient for the superintendence of the repairs of the roads, were perhaps appointed against their wish, and remained in office for a year only. True, there was generally some remuneration fixed by the vestry as a salary for the road surveyor, but it was so small that it probably barely covered his expenses during his year of office.

It would certainly seem that the annual appointment of persons occasionally unwilling to act and in very many cases wholly incompetent to discharge the duties either imposed on or obtained by them, and delegating to them the duty of expending the large amount annually raised by highway rates throughout the kingdom, was a very unsatisfactory system. The deputing to persons thus appointed the collection and administration of a sum of no less than £1,273,000, which was the amount of rates levied for highways in the year 1839, without any adequate control as regarded expenditure, is so much at variance with

the general practice in business at the present day, of audits and supervision by the contributors to any large sums raised by compulsory means, such as rates, that it is rather a matter of astonishment it should have existed so long. The poor-rate used to be collected and disbursed in the same manner, and the flagrant abuses which were discovered in the administration of it, and the vastly expensive and illegal modes which were customary, led, in a great measure, to the introduction of Lord Althorp's Poor-Law Bill in 1834, which eventually became the Poor-Law Union Act, under which the present system of the poor law is carried on. Acting probably on this principle, the union of parishes for highway purposes was recommended in 1840; and, although the Highway Act, passed in the year after the Poor-Law Act, enabled parishes to form themselves into unions for the purpose of appointing a general surveyor, the formation of highway boards under the existing system was not adopted until the year 1862, when magistrates at quarter sessions were empowered to form highway districts or unions, the highway board, consisting of the waywardens for the several parishes in the union, being elected annually by the parishioners, together with some *ex-officio* members.

This plan for the management of the highways by boards follows very closely upon that of the poor-law

unions, which, it may be presumed, had been found to work satisfactorily, a period of twenty-eight years having elapsed between the time when the poor-law unions were established, in 1834, and the highway boards were constituted under the authority of the Highway Act in 1862. This difference, however, exists between the two. The former was instituted by the Poor-Law Commissioners, without the parishes having the power to prevent their being incorporated, or having any power to withdraw from a union after once having been included in it; while under the Highway Act there is a power of protesting against the formation of highway unions or districts, and the adoption of the Act is not compulsory, as even at the present time—twenty years after the Act was passed—there are still more than 5,000 parishes not included in any district, but still managing their own highways separately, and 8,000 included in 376 districts, including North Wales.

It would seem that the system of districts has not been uniformly approved, as, although up to 1881 the districts formed generally increased by a few numbers in each year, yet no less than a decrease of 256 had taken place in the parishes comprised in districts, which can only be accounted for by those parishes being dissatisfied with their experience of the system, and availing themselves

of the power of subtraction or dissolution of the district authorized by the Act. Another circumstance which affords some guidance as to the opinion formed generally of the working of the Act may be gathered from the fact that in twenty counties in England and North Wales the parishes are nearly all included in highway districts, and in several others the system has been adopted with respect to the majority of the parishes, while in seven counties no highway districts are in existence.

The election of the members of highway boards and poor-law guardians in unions is similar, both being elected annually—about Lady-day—by the parishioners; in one case under the denomination of waywardens, and in the other of guardians; in both instances justices of the peace being, under certain circumstances, *ex-officio* members of the board. The number of guardians for each parish, and also of waywardens, is fixed at the original constitution of each board.

Each board has a clerk and treasurer, and the modes of raising the necessary funds are very similar, the guardians issuing their orders to the different parishes for their share of the moneys required for the union expenses, and the highway board doing the same for the moneys they require; in each case the moneys being raised by rates, while the general

supervision and control of both boards, including the forms to be used by them, the mode of keeping their accounts, and the audit of them, is vested in the Local Government Board.

It is obvious that some well-organized system for the general management of the highways throughout the kingdom was absolutely necessary, looking to the fact that roads are annually being disturnpiked, and consequently falling on the highway authorities, whether parochial or district, for their maintenance and management; so that the work of highway boards, it may be fairly assumed, will very considerably increase—the length of highways, both in districts and parishes, in England and Wales being with the main roads 115,773 miles; and, as in a very few years all roads will probably have been disturnpiked, their length will be added to this already large number.

To go more into details of figures might not probably be very interesting, but I may mention that the average cost per mile of maintaining the roads in highway districts in 1880 was £12 9s., and of the main roads in such districts for the same period £35 11s.

Before the institution of highway boards, in order to keep down the rates as far as possible, and avoid sending old and decrepit men (against their will,

perhaps) into the union or to the relieving officer for outdoor relief, it was a very common occurrence to apply to the surveyor of the highway to know if he could not give poor old So-and-So a day or two in the week 'on the roads,' which accounted for one so frequently seeing very old and nearly worn-out men slowly and with great difficulty dragging a scraper across some by-road or lane, or trying to break a few stones with a hammer. It was probably some consolation to them to be able to get a crust without surrendering their freedom by going into the union—a laudable spirit of independence certainly; though I question very much whether, as a matter of economy, it answered the purpose. True, the ninepence or a shilling paid for the day's labour was not much, neither was the amount of work done considerable; but as a means of giving assistance to some of the aged poor, without imposing on them the stigma, as they frequently regarded it, of applying for 'parish relief,' it perhaps answered the purpose.

Now that the accounts of highway boards have to be kept in somewhat elaborate form, and the disbursement of their funds by the officers is minutely examined, the getting a fair day's work for a fair day's wage may preclude any indulgence on the part of the surveyors, rendering it incumbent upon them to employ only able and thoroughly efficient labourers

for the performance of their work. Thus the poor old road-man or stone-breaker, who sometimes was an addition to the picturesqueness of the country lane, will entirely disappear, like another race of men with whom he was nearly connected—that is the turnpike-gatekeepers; both the stone-breakers and the toll-keepers affording instances of the rule that all public improvements are attended by some loss to individuals. The sum paid daily was perhaps so small that the trustees of the turnpike trusts did not look too narrowly into this mode of expenditure of their tolls, or consider whether the article cheapest in price is always the best.

It may not be uninteresting to see how in the old days, under parochial management, highway business was transacted. When I say old days, I mean when the Highway Act of 1835 prescribed the duties of the road surveyors, and laid down generally the law relative to highways, as it was to be thenceforth carried out. The position of affairs is very different at the present day, having been materially altered, principally in matters relating to the accounts, within the last few years.

Nearly all parochial business was transacted at the parish vestries. Overseers, churchwardens, and road surveyors were chosen at them. The amounts for which the several rates were to be made

J. Sturgess del et lith

Hanhart imp

CHAIN SNAPPED & COACH RAN ON THE WHEELERS.

were fixed; and, having said thus much, it is scarcely necessary to add that the discussions on financial questions often waxed very warm, as I have mentioned, on the subject of highways, and rows at vestries were quite proverbial. One curious circumstance in connection with the making of poor-rates may perhaps be unknown to many persons intimately connected with poor-law administration at the present time. All poor-rates were, by Act of Parliament, to be published by notice *in the church* on the next Sunday after the rate had been allowed by the magistrates, and no rate was valid until such notice had been given; accordingly, the parish clerk used to read out from his desk in the church, during the morning service, notice that a rate for the relief of the poor had been made. This practice, however, was altered by an Act of Parliament passed in the first year of the present reign, which substituted the affixing written or printed notices on the church doors for the public reading out in church.

As regards the powers of parish surveyors to make rates, it was usual, but not necessary in order to make it legal, for the surveyor to submit a statement of the amount he proposed to raise or required to the vestry; but, unlike the overseers, he was restricted by the Highway Act as to the extent to which he could tax the parishioners, which directed

that no rate should exceed at one time 10d. in the pound, or 2s. 6d. in the year, unless specially authorized by the ratepayers in the manner pointed out by the Act. The surveyor having made out his rate-book in the form prescribed by the statute, and got it allowed by two magistrates, and then duly published, let us look a little into the manner in which he used to expend it, and the account he had to give of it before he came to the vestry for another rate. I say 'came to the vestry,' for it was generally looked upon as a necessary step before a rate could be made; at all events, no surveyor was bold enough to incur the odium of ignoring the vestry and making a rate, as he might have done, privately in his own little back parlour. Of course, under such circumstances he would never expect to be re-appointed at the end of the parochial term, even if he desired it, which, in some cases where there were emoluments attached to the office, might occur.

To set the vestry at defiance in a small agricultural or out-of-the-way parish was tantamount to making enemies of all the principal inhabitants—not a very desirable position to be placed in. By the Highway Act of 1835, some forms of account to be kept by the surveyors, and annual returns to be made by them, are set out in the schedules to the Act, and these accounts were verified on the oath of the surveyors

before two magistrates about Lady-day. About the year 1879 this practice was discontinued, and an audit of the surveyor's accounts by the official Government auditor, directed in the same manner as audits of Poor-Law officers' accounts, and a system of keeping the accounts in accordance with that in use for highway boards, was substituted.

The necessity for a more strict supervision of the parochial surveyor's accounts was rendered apparent, inasmuch as it was by no means unusual for any items of disbursements which could not be passed by the official auditor of the Poor-Law accounts, or would not be allowed by the vestry out of the church-rates when they were in existence, to be put into the highway accounts, where they might either pass unobserved, or not be demurred to by persons who strongly objected to the payment of church-rates, and accordingly at the vestry meetings would repudiate any charge which could not be strictly and legally included in them. To put them into the surveyor's account was the common mode of disposing of all such payments as parish officers had made, and were unable to reimburse themselves from any other sources.

A few instances will show what payments the Government auditors used to find when they commenced auditing the parochial highway accounts. In

a parish in South Wales it appeared that at a vestry it was resolved, 'That for any grown-up fox killed within the hamlet, and for producing the head of the same to the guardian of the said hamlet, the person will receive the sum of £1 1s., and also for a pup will receive 10s. 6d.; and also for a raven, on the production of the same, will receive 2s. 6d. from the guardian of the said hamlet.' And, in accordance with this resolution, a payment was made by the overseers for the killing of a fox, and the sum was charged in the highway-rate accounts. The auditor disallowed this sum, and the Local Government Board confirmed the disallowance, on the ground that no ingenuity could connect the slaughter of foxes with the repair of the highways.

In another case a club had existed more than five-and-twenty years for the destruction of sparrows, the expenses being paid out of the highway-rate. It is needless to state that the auditor disallowed the payment, whereupon the surveyor appealed to the Local Government Board, alleging that it was the first time the accounts had been audited, that he was quite unaware that it was wrong, and that the club had been formed because there were so many thatched houses, and the sparrows destroyed them and the corn. The farmers used to shoot the sparrows, and sell them to a person who was afterwards repaid

out of the rate. £3 10s. 1d. had been paid in this instance, together with a sum of 12s. for fees, but what these were was not explained. The number of sparrows slaughtered for this sum appeared to be 1,383, and of these 765 fell to the share of the men and boys in the village.

A different class of persons were the mole-catchers, whose remuneration for many years was charged upon the highway-rate in frequent instances. In one of these cases the persons surcharged appealed to the Local Government Board, stating, in support of their appeal, that, having no other available source from which to pay a sum of £6 for two years' mole-catching, they paid it from the surveyor's account. The mole-catcher in another case was paid yearly £1 15s. to keep the land clear of moles. This was a fixed sum, and did not vary whether the moles killed were few or many.

In a parish where it had been the custom for twenty years to take a penny in the pound from the highway-rate once in two or three years, to pay the expense of destroying moles and sparrows, the surveyor stated that they engaged a man to pay for the sparrows. He took them from the children, by whom they were principally caught, and paid for them at the rate of a penny for two old ones and young ones, and a penny for eight eggs.

In another case a hat and coat for the bellman were paid for out of the surveyor's account. In order to facilitate the delivery of letters in another country parish, a charge was made on the highway-rate for fifty-two weeks' remuneration of a fit person appointed to meet the postman daily at a given spot, carry the letters thence, and deliver them.

That the feasting of parochial officers, about which one hears a good deal even at the present time, is not an institution of to-day, appears from the disallowance of a considerable charge on the ground that the payment was made for the personal refreshment of members of the highway board and others, on an inspection of the roads in the district. The surveyor in this instance appealed to the Local Government Board, urging in support of his appeal that a perambulation of the district was deemed necessary; that those who took part in it had a hard day's work, and had thus a right to some refreshment, for which reasonable expenses should be allowed. The Board, however, were unable to consider champagne a reasonable item in the bill.

In another case the auditor, and also the Board, considered that early salmon, sherry, and pale ale could not be charged on funds raised by compulsory taxation, although the appellant was of opinion that the repast did not exceed the bounds of reasonable refreshment.

The effect of these official audits of course was that the illegal payments which had been regularly made for many years were discontinued; and in the case of one of the mole-catchers who had been paid for some fifteen or twenty years, on his remuneration being stopped he threatened the surveyor with legal proceedings, because he considered he had not had proper notice.

The instances cited sufficiently demonstrate the laxity which used generally to exist in the administration of funds raised by compulsory taxation; and, although I have only referred to those payments which were made out of highway-rates, gross abuses and most flagrant illegalities were perpetrated in the management of poor-rates before the establishment of the present poor-law unions and audit of parochial poor-law accounts.

The era of serious misappropriation of funds legally raised for special purposes may now be considered at an end, as, whenever a legislative measure is passed, involving the raising considerable sums by means of rates, such as for sanitary, school, or other local purposes, adequate protection is afforded to the ratepayers by requiring proper accounts to be kept in specified forms, and periodically passed by an independent official auditor. The days of the payment of fox destroyers, and mole and sparrow killers, may now be looked on as past.

CHAPTER II.

ROAD ENGINEERS.

The improvement of the roads seems to have progressed rather more expeditiously after the establishment of Palmer's mail-coach between London and Bristol than it had done in previous years, it being a matter of necessity to put them into such condition as to render them fit for the mails to travel on. With this advancement in the condition of the great main roads, that of the other roads naturally followed, but the inauguration of a system of improving the roads is due to the great practical talent and scientific ability of Mr. Loudon McAdam, his son Sir James McAdam, and Mr. Telford, a noted engineer.

Some information respecting men to whom the thanks of the country at large are due, is not out of place; for although the use of the roads, that is main roads, has much diminished since the introduction of railways, McAdam's system continues, and we are indebted to him for the good roads we now have as a means of transit all over the kingdom.

Mr. Loudon McAdam came to this country from America in the year 1783, at a time when many new roads were being made in Scotland. He was appointed a commissioner of them, and in that capacity studied the subject of road-making. He afterwards removed to Bristol, and took charge of the roads in that district as surveyor in 1816, because it enabled him to carry his principles into practice, and make the necessary experiments for establishing them. His improvements have been generally conducted under his own direction, or that of his sons. He considered that by a proper application of materials a good road might be made in every county.

He and his sons had the superintendence of more than three hundred miles of road, and twice as many more were improved by their advice and assistance.

The grand object of all modern roads is the accommodation of vehicles, and in order to accomplish this the most essential requisite is to have the surface as smooth, hard, and level as possible; hence in a soft road, where the wheel sinks in deeply, the draught becomes exceedingly heavy. But whether a broad or narrow wheel were the most advantageous seemed to be an unsettled question, as the narrow wheel might often run between stones, where the broad wheel would have to pass over them; and a very accurate practical road-maker said that a good road never

suffered from narrow wheels with moderate weights when not in rapid motion, but was equally worn by the rapid driving of heavy stage-coaches, and by the slow grinding of overloaded broad-wheeled waggons.

It would seem that the institution of turnpikes originated about the beginning of the last century, when the maintenance of the roads was removed from the parishes through which they passed and levied on the travellers by means of tolls; but the condition of the roads was not said to be improved by the adoption of this system.

Mr. McAdam's leading principle was that a road ought to be considered as an artificial flooring, forming a strong, smooth, solid surface capable of carrying great weights and over which carriages might pass without meeting any impediment.

The leading feature in his system was setting a limit to the size and weight of the stones to be put on the roads, the weight being limited to six ounces; so for the purpose of ascertaining this correctly, the surveyors were directed to carry a small pair of scales and a six-ounce weight, and in order to test the size, a small iron ring, through which the stones might be passed.

The practised eye of the surveyor would detect by a glance at a heap of stones whether they were in the main broken in compliance with his requirements,

while in the event of any difference of opinion on the point between himself and the stone-breaker, he had the means for conclusively settling the point on the spot. Women, boys, and old men past hard labour, Mr. McAdam said, could sit down and break stones into small pieces not exceeding six ounces in weight. They should be broken at the sides, and not on the road; notwithstanding which, the latter mode is practised in some of the by-roads, even at the present time.

With reference to the manner of putting the stones on to the road when broken, he was decidedly against any mixture of earth, clay, chalk, or any other matter that would imbibe water, or be affected by frost, as being superfluous, and generally injurious; as good stone, well broken, would always combine by its own roughness into a solid substance with a smooth surface that would not be affected by the vicissitudes of weather or the action of wheels.

The soundness of this advice was demonstrated in one year. When a hard frost was succeeded by a sudden thaw, a great number of roads broke up, and the wheels penetrated into the original soil, and those roads in which chalk was a component part became nearly impassable; even roads made over chalky soils gave way in many places, while not one of the roads which had been thoroughly made according to McAdam's directions had given way.

Another material advantage of his plan was the employment of a much greater proportion of human labour instead of the work of horses. Previously, one-fourth of the whole expense was paid for men's labour, and three-fourths for that of horses; but on his method being adopted, one-fourth only was paid for horses' labour, and the other three to men, women, and children. Large stones, he said, would constantly work up by the agitation of the traffic on the road, and leave spaces for the reception of water, and the only way of keeping the stones in their places was to have them of uniform size.

In one road made on his system, in consequence of the nature of the original soil, it became necessary to put on in many parts, before the road was sufficiently consolidated, as much as three feet of materials; it was, however, ultimately made excellent, though at an expense of little less than a thousand pounds a mile.

On the subject of paved roads, and those made on his system, McAdam said that in steep ascents pavements were most objectionable; and added that 'it was said that at the north end of Blackfriars Bridge more horses fell and received injury than at any other spot in the kingdom.

His choice as to the natural subsoil over which to construct a road is rather curious, but of course per-

fectly correct, being based on large actual experience, though most probably at variance with the general notions upon the subject.

He preferred a bog to any other foundation for a road, provided it would allow a man to walk over it, as the resistance to the motion of a carriage would not be materially affected by the foundation if the road was well made, and he mentioned a road which shook when carriages passed over it, yet the consumption of materials was less than on the limestone rock in the neighbourhood. In the construction of such roads he did not use any faggots nor any stones exceeding six ounces in weight, and those sank in the bog, but united in one mass like a piece of timber.

As regards the wheels of vehicles passing along the roads, he thought broad wheels less advantageous than was generally supposed; and he suggested that the tolls might always be fairly assessed in proportion to the number of horses employed, it being said that their feet did more harm to the road than wheels; and he also suggested that waggoners should be encouraged to harness their horses in pairs rather than in a line one behind the other, which wore a channel or pathway along the road.

As might naturally be supposed, McAdam came into communication with the London coach proprie-

tors, and learnt their opinions on the construction of roads, their information, like his own, being derived from practical experience, and the influence of good or bad roads upon their horses. Mr. Waterhouse said his horses working near London lasted about four years, but in remoter districts about six; and he agreed with Mr. McAdam that a slight convexity only was more desirable for a road than a greater, and that the gravel near London was too often used without being sufficiently sifted. What were then called the light coaches with their loads were computed to weigh about two tons and a half, divided thus: the coach one, the passengers one, and the luggage a half. Another proprietor, in corroboration of Mr. McAdam's plan as to the exclusion of soft materials from the stones put on the road, said that since the adoption of flints instead of gravel, sixteen miles were as easily performed on it by his horses as twelve were before the alteration.

Having originated and thoroughly established his mode of constructing and repairing roads, McAdam instilled his principles into the minds of his sons, and one of them (who afterwards became Sir James McAdam) succeeded to his father's reputation, making such improvements in roads as to become known throughout the kingdom. His system was named after himself, and the appellation is in use to this

day; a road made or repaired on his plan being described as 'Macadamised.'

Thus James McAdam, having acquired a thorough practical experience in the management and making of roads, and having filled many important situations in connection with them, was eventually made Sir James McAdam, became the General Superintendent of the Metropolitan Roads, and was in that position at the time when railways were gradually being opened from London, or, as he expressed it, 'the calamity of railways has fallen upon us.' His remark was made with reference to the diminution of the tolls along the main roads out of London, and the consequent reduction in the funds available for keeping them in an efficient state of repair.

In the year 1839, in anticipation of an annually increasing diminution in the tolls, McAdam foretold what has since occurred, viz., the maintenance of the roads by the parishes through which they pass. If, he said, the creditors exercised the right they possessed of taking the tolls for payment of the principal and interest due to them, the maintenance of the roads by the parishes must be a most serious point; it was taking place silently throughout the kingdom, and as soon as this became better known, and the ease with which it might be done, he had no doubt a great many turnpike-roads in the kingdom would be

in the hands of the creditors, and the parishes would be left to keep them, not in good, but in passable repair.

Under the institution of Highway Boards, elsewhere referred to, this has come to pass, with some assistance from the national Exchequer in the case of the main roads.

In his annual report some four years later, he says: 'Much additional thoroughfare and wear have continued to take place upon the upper portions of the roads in the Metropolis during past years, arising from the great increase in the number of public carriages rendered necessary for the conveyance of the public to and from the several railway stations, and by the extension of buildings in almost every direction along the lines of the several roads. A large addition has therefore taken place in the number of horses kept in London, by which the carriage of hay, straw, corn and green provender, paying only half toll, has been much increased; and the roads have now to sustain, principally during the winter season, a severe additional and heavy return-carriage of manure which pays no toll, and being principally in narrow-wheeled waggons weighing from six to eight tons, causes the consumption of much material, and the expenditure of much labour.'

Notwithstanding the vast national benefits derived

from the ability and talents of Mr. McAdam and his sons, they did not reap from the Government the financial reward they were so justly entitled to expect; petitions to Parliament and other endeavours to obtain adequate remuneration for the services rendered by them were not altogether successful.

Indirectly the establishment of many mails and the acceleration of others were attributable to the labour and scientific abilities of Mr. McAdam, for without good roads the coaches or mails never could have attained anything approximating their rate of speed for some years prior to their being superseded by railways.

The acceleration of postal communication means, in fact, the bringing places nearer to each other, and very greatly facilitates the general commercial transactions of the whole kingdom.

But, although the Postmaster-General obtained great advantages in the expeditious transit of all the correspondence committed to his charge, he was not in a position to make any recompense to the persons through whose agency the advantages accrued, the Treasury being the Government department through which these payments would be made.

It may be that this division of departments has been the means of causing not less than three great men, including Mr. McAdam, to be dealt with by the

Government in a very parsimonious spirit. I allude to Sir Rowland Hill and Mr. Palmer, both of whom had to encounter an immense amount of opposition and obloquy before their respective schemes were ultimately accepted. Petitions to Parliament to have their services adequately remunerated, and urgent applications to Government departments failed in producing the desired effect; but in Sir Rowland Hill's case there was this satisfaction, that the country at large was sensible of the benefits bestowed upon them by his system of the penny postage, and practically gave expression to its views by the presentation to him of a handsome pecuniary testimonial, independently of which he retired upon a pension on more liberal terms than usual.

It was not without a good deal of toil and labour, extending over a period of nearly twenty years, that Mr. Palmer succeeded in obtaining a Parliamentary grant of fifty thousand pounds. He, like Sir Rowland Hill, had had a great many rebuffs—to use a mild expression—in the course of his endeavours to establish a mail-coach.

Some of the disagreeables that Mr. Palmer met with in the course of his connection with the Post Office arose from his own impetuosity and indiscretion, which brought him into hostile collision with the other officials, who, in some instances, were not slow

in availing themselves of opportunities of retaliating upon him for any grievances he had inflicted upon them.

In a notice of the great road-makers the name of Telford, the eminent engineer and principal manager of the Holyhead Road, must not be omitted.

He was not, like McAdam, the originator of an entirely new mode of constructing or maintaining roads, but he was an engineer of high standing, and an authority on all matters connected with roads. To him were due many of the improvements on the Great Holyhead Road, which was under the Road Commissioners, so that he did not come into direct contact with the Government, or hold any official position under it; thus he was saved all the anxiety and disappointment, with a vast amount of trouble, devolving upon some of those who, as I have shown, were connected with the Postal Office.

Public services, though often highly appreciated if we may judge from merely verbal expressions of gratitude, are not always requited in a more pleasing and substantial form to the satisfaction or according to the acknowledged deserts of the benefactor; unlike the poor negro, who, in giving a subscription to a hospital from which he had derived benefit, being unable to express in language his feelings of gratitude

contributed according to his ability, accompanying his subscription with 'Me grateful one guinea.'

The aspect of the roads on which McAdam and Telford bestowed so much care and attention, in many instances, is now melancholy, and betokens the state into which Sir James McAdam anticipated they would get when he said the parish would keep them not in good, but in passable repair, which they are as to a portion only of their width in many parts.

It is well, perhaps, that the great supporters of our roads in years long since past cannot see them in their present altered and dilapidated state, looking almost like country lanes; about one half only of what was once a broad fine road being now metalled and kept in repair, while the remaining portion is more or less covered with weeds and grass, as is also the case with a considerable part of the footpaths. Main roads as they used to be, and as they are now, are vastly different.

J.Sturgess del.et lith.

Hanhart imp

EXPOSED TO THE PELTING BLAST.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD COACHING ROADS.

Since the day when mail-coaches ceased running, and the annual procession of the mails on the Queen's birthday was discontinued some forty years since, no opportunity has existed of seeing any number of four-horse coaches together except at the annual meets of the Four-in-hand and Coaching Clubs. Although these two clubs have only been instituted since the days of regular coach-travelling, there appears long anterior to that time to have been an amateur coaching club of some description or other. So long since as the year 1806, there was the Driving Club, the favourite rendezvous of which was the Black Dog at Bedfont, on the road from Hounslow to Staines, and the members of the club used to drive down from London, dine, and return in the evening, the distance being just over thirteen miles from Hyde Park Corner. At the late meets of the Four-in-hand and Coaching Clubs in the Park nearly thirty coaches appeared on each occasion, and the crowded state of

the Park showed the great interest taken in them; in fact, a meet has now become one of *the* things of the season which Society must attend.

Anything at all like road-travelling—that is to say, by a conveyance combining some degree of comfort with a reasonable speed—was developed somewhat suddenly, but disappeared still more suddenly.

The improvement commenced about the year 1784, when a Mr. John Palmer, who was the manager of the Bath Theatre, having become connected with the Post Office, succeeded, in the face of very strong opposition and prejudice, in starting the first mail-coach in substitution for the previous tardy and unsafe mode of conveying the letters by boys, on what were described as being 'worn-out hacks.' Mr. Pitt, who was then in office, induced the Government to give Mr. Palmer's scheme a trial; although it was declared to be 'an impossibility,' likely to lead to crime, 'as when once desperate fellows had determined upon robbing the mail, resistance would lead to murder.' For many years, however, after the introduction of Palmer's system, no attempt was made to rob the coaches. So bad, though, was the state of the roads, even to nearly the end of the last century, that it took a man two days and three nights' incessant travelling to get from Manchester to Glasgow in the coach, and a day and a half between

Edinburgh and Glasgow. With the cross-roads it was even worse, as in many instances where mail-coaches had been applied for, and the Post Office authorities had consented to put them on, they were obliged to wait until the roads were ready to receive them. The accelerated speed in travelling may be attributed mainly to the great road engineers, Telford and McAdam, as, from the condition in which we learn that the roads used to be, with ruts up to the axle-trees of the carriages, anything like speed was out of the question altogether. Telford had the management of the Holyhead Road to Shrewsbury, and was also extensively employed on other roads by the Road Commissioners. That his assistance was wanted on the Holyhead Road is evinced by the circumstance that when a new mail-coach was put on the road in 1808, twenty-two townships were indicted by the Post Office authorities for having their roads in a dangerous and unfinished state.

That the London and Holyhead Road, however, was not neglected, may be gathered from the fact that at different times more than six or seven Acts of Parliament relating to it were passed for the purpose of authorizing alterations for shortening the distance, improving the gradients, and raising the necessary funds for executing the works by loans. The last Act was obtained so late as the year 1831 for the

purpose of making alterations and improvements, etc., commencing at the Wellington Inn at the foot of Highgate Hill farthest from London, and proceeding thence to Barnet, omitting the street through that town, but comprising a portion of the road leading to Hatfield, and past the 'Highstone' at Hadley, which was erected to commemorate the battle of Barnet, as appears by the inscription on it. The Great Northern Railway passes not far from the spot, and when the ground was being dug up for its construction, weapons of various kinds were occasionally met with, and also some old articles in the pottery of the period.

The record on the stone is to the effect that the battle of Barnet, between Edward IV. and Guy, Earl of Warwick, was fought there in 1471, and that the earl was defeated and slain.

Probably in the year 1831, when the last Act of Parliament relating to the Holyhead Road was obtained, there was little if any idea that there would ever be a railway taking all the traffic off the road, including the old broad-wheeled waggon, as the Act prescribes the tolls to be taken in the various cases where 'the fellies of the wheels of the waggon, wain, dray, cart, caravan, or other such-like carriage, by whatever name the same now is or may hereafter be called or described, are of the breadth of six inches

or more.' Other tolls were fixed for the narrower fellies, being four and a half inches or less. The tolls were fixed on the horses—being, in fact, sixpence for every horse drawing any coach, chaise, or other like vehicle, whereas the amount on each horse drawing the broad-wheeled waggon was only twopence. The object in assessing the toll was evidently to make the vehicles doing the greatest amount of damage to the road pay the highest amount. That great exertions were made to render the Holyhead Road available in every respect for a large and expeditious traffic over it, is manifest from the very large sums expended upon it, for in the year 1841 the trustees of different parts of the road between London and Shrewsbury had at various times between the years 1825 and 1831 received advances out of the Consolidated Fund amounting to no less than £83,700; and as these advances were only made for 'improvements,' the annual expenses of repair had to be paid out of the tolls.

Could some of the old coachmen and guards who used to travel on the road rise out of their graves, great would be their astonishment to see its condition now, with grass growing actually on the parts over which they used to drive, only a narrow space in the centre being kept in repair, and used by the few carts and other light vehicles passing along

now and then—nothing with 'fellies of the breadth of six inches or more' having regularly travelled on it for many years, the nearest approach to such a thing probably being the thrashing-machine, the weight and wheels of which certainly do not tend to improve a road; indeed, from their great weight it is a very common thing to see on bridges in by-roads notice-boards prohibiting thrashing-machines from crossing, as the bridges are only strong enough to bear ordinary traffic. This must be rather inconvenient where a thrashing-machine is let out for hire at various farms, necessitating its passage along the roads between the different places at which it is required.

That these machines are not more generally in use is perhaps a matter of congratulation with those who have to drive about country lanes much, notwithstanding the warning of the man in advance with the red flag and the shutting off the steam, as the huge engine itself is an object few horses will pass quietly. Thrashing-machines were not to be seen on the roads in the days of mails and coaches, or there might occasionally have been an entry on the guard's time-bill on the 'Quicksilver' mail or Manchester 'Telegraph,' 'Three minutes lost in getting past a thrashing-machine met in the road at ——;' and this, perhaps, if any accident occurred, might have

led to the painting of a sensational coaching picture, as was the case with the Exeter mail when a lioness escaped from a travelling caravan of Wombwell's, and sprang on one of the leaders near Winterslow Hut, on Salisbury Plain, October 20, 1816. The event was not lost on the artists of that day, who duly depicted it. The appearance on the ground of a large dog which attacked the lioness, and thus diverted her attention, together with the arrival of one of the keepers from the caravan, prevented further injury to the horse, which lived to work for some years in coaches.

When steam-power was introduced into the agricultural districts in the shape of thrashing-machines, a very strong prejudice (perhaps not altogether unnaturally) was excited in the mind of 'Hodge,' who began to look upon his occupation as gone; and so strong was this fear that it led to an extensive system of incendiarism, and threatening letters, signed 'Swing,' were frequently received by farmers, warning them against the employment of the machines, and giving them to understand that on their failing to take the hint they would in all probability find their corn-ricks burnt down some morning. The threatening was carried on so extensively and systematically that it caused quite a panic in the agricultural and corn-growing parts of the country. A

somewhat similar raid, it may be remembered, was carried on at a more recent period against turnpikes in South Wales. There, the individual from whom the threats of vengeance were supposed to emanate passed under the *nom de guerre* of 'Rebecca;' and the onslaught was on 'pikes,' which, in the event of their not being spontaneously removed, would, it was stated, be forcibly demolished, a threat which was in many instances carried out in what were called the 'Rebecca riots.' How many 'pikes' have since been removed by the peaceable means of Acts of Parliament, is perhaps best known to those deeply interested in the subject, from having been creditors on the different turnpike trusts and holders of turnpike bonds, at one time considered almost as safe an investment as Consols or Exchequer Bills.

I remember to have seen somewhere, and regret much I have not got it, a capital description of a toll-house for sale when the turnpike was done away with. Although it was, in fact, only a burlesque on what would have been the auctioneer's actual particulars of sale, and, to say the least of it, very flowery and highly coloured, still it could not be characterized as actually fallacious. It was very cleverly done; and no one reading it would have supposed it actually referred to a turnpike-house. All I can recollect of it is that it described a substantially built brick cottage

on the borders of Middlesex and Surrey, situate on the banks of the River Thames, and adjacent to one of the main-roads to the West of England. The actual property referred to was no other than the toll-house at the end of Staines Bridge, on the left-hand side as you go from Staines to Egham.

When the Exeter 'Defiance,' one of Mrs. Ann Nelson's coaches, from the Bull Inn, Aldgate, went through the gate at Staines, all the tolls at the gates below that were paid by the guard every Monday, amounting to about thirty pounds. It so happened that the keeper of the gate near Ilchester had got in arrear with his payments to the trustees, and accordingly their clerk served a notice on the guard of the coach not to pay him any more tolls. The gate-keeper being aware of this, by way of availing himself of the most effective weapon for counteracting the practical carrying out of the clerk's notice, shut the gate before the time for the arrival of the coach. When the guard came in sight of the gate, which, somewhat to his surprise at so unusual a circumstance, was closed, he blew the horn, but all to no purpose; the gate remained shut, the pike-keeper refusing to open it until the tolls for the week which were then due were paid. The guard refused to pay, but tendered three shillings, being the amount for the coach on that day. Eventually the coach was allowed to

go through, but in the meantime the pike-keeper had got a horse and trap in which he managed to reach the next gate before the coach, where a similar parley took place. The keeper of this gate was more obdurate than the Ilchester one, and refused to capitulate; but the guard had been told when he was served with the notice what he was to do in the event of resistance, and that he would be indemnified against proceedings which might be taken against him for withholding the tolls and getting the coach through the gate. In his tool-box and about the coach he carried a few articles for use in case of break-downs or anything happening to the coach during a journey, and among these most opportunely were a small saw and jimmy, with which he intimated his intention to storm the enemy's outworks, and effect a passage through the gate. This led to a single combat between the pike-keeper and guard, but the latter being a big man and not wholly deficient in pugilistic knowledge, became the victor, and the coach went through the gate without the threatened cutting a way through having to be resorted to. The circumstance of the coach being stopped at the two gates arose from the tolls being leased to the same person, and he it was in fact who was in arrear with the payments to the trustees, the gate-keeper in each instance being merely his collector, whose duty it

was to hand the money over to his employer, who, in the phraseology of the day, 'farmed' the tolls, which were put up periodically by the trustees for tender; the person whose tender was accepted then paid the fixed amount to the trustees, and took all the tolls at the gates, looking to the difference between the two for his profit after paying the expenses of collecting.

Meetings of turnpike trustees were considered of some importance, next, perhaps, to petty and quarter sessions, being attended by magistrates, gentlemen of property in the neighbourhood, or other persons duly qualified, together with a clerk and surveyor. They occasioned pleasant meetings among the squires and clergymen, who sometimes were appointed trustees, combining business with pleasure, a ride over in the morning to discuss various matters in connection with the roads, followed by a lunch at the inn where the meetings in purely rural districts were usually held, and a chat about the last run or the next meet of the hounds. Joseph Baxendale, the head of the firm of 'Pickford,' was one of the trustees appointed by an Act of Parliament relating to the Whetstone Trust on the North Road, where his house was situate, and the Pickford vans with four horses used to pass. They were different from the Pickford vans at the present day, being much lighter, more in the shape of

an omnibus, closed in for conveyance of goods only, and travelling at a trotting pace. A large stone, from which probably Whetstone took its name, is still to be seen there, but the turnpike gate and house are both gone.

It was a busy time at Whetstone Gate about Barnet Fair in the beginning of September, before the London and North-Western, better known at its origin as the London and Birmingham Railway, opened, and before the cattle disease caused such havoc among stock.

The mails and coaches on the northern roads filled well with persons having business at the fair. As one of the largest in the kingdom, it necessarily drew together an immense concourse of people. Irish horses, Welsh ponies, black Scotch and Welsh cattle, Herefords and Devons, were all numerously represented. Buyers and sellers from all parts of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland had to travel by road, and generally remained in the town four or five days, the fair lasting three; the afternoon of the last winding up with a pleasure fair, including a Welshmen's race for a saddle and bridle, the stakes being raised by subscriptions previously collected from residents. The race certainly was unique in its way, the horses being such as the drovers or cattle-dealers had ridden up to the fair, and the riders

the drovers, who sometimes rode with saddle and bridle, but, in default of possessing those articles, would ride bareback with or without a bridle, as the case might be, or with only a halter. That the usual attire of a jockey was entirely dispensed with followed as a matter of course; so far from putting on any costume, the practice was generally the reverse, the riders being in their shirt-sleeves, with pocket-handkerchiefs tied round their heads, the only qualification being that they should be *bonâ fide* Welshmen, and drovers.

The shouting and jabbering in Welsh at the starting-post was something terrific, there generally being about ten or a dozen runners; and as they came into the straight run to the winning-post the cattle-dealers, on their horses, followed immediately, galloping up the course as hard as they could go—all shouting, of course. Then some half-dozen of the dealers would start off for a race on their own account, going the whole round of the course, shouting all the time. It was certainly a scene that should have been witnessed to be thoroughly understood. When the Great Northern Railway Company made their branch line from Finsbury Park to Barnet the racing was done for, the line running straight along a considerable part of the course.

Innkeepers in Barnet made a grand harvest at the

fair, all their houses being full, and also the inn-keepers along the road, together with the coach and mail proprietors, turnpike lessees, and others connected with the road traffic, not forgetting the neighbouring farmers, as the droves of cattle all walked up from Scotland and Wales, and fields were required to turn them into during their journey, which from the more distant parts of the country occupied a period of a month or six weeks. A few days' rest, moreover, was required before the first day of the fair; and for some days previously the fields round Barnet, which is in what is called 'the grass country,' used to be black with the Scotch and Welsh cattle. After the railways were made they were all brought up by them, and the mode of transacting business changed entirely. A man travelling up by the coach two or three hundred miles required some rest before returning, and necessarily stayed a night or two in the town; but when he could come up from Scotland in ten or eleven hours, sitting quietly all night in a railway carriage, or perhaps in a sleeping-car, he could drop down to Barnet by eleven o'clock, go through the whole fair, buy all he wanted, leave the town again at one or two o'clock, and start for Scotland the same night.

In nothing, perhaps, has so great a revolution ever

taken place as in travelling during the last sixty or seventy years, both by land and water. Then our mails used to be conveyed abroad in sailing vessels, taking months to perform their voyages, with the uncertainties attendant upon wind and weather; now they are conveyed regularly in as many weeks by splendid steamers running to all countries in the world; and a person having a month's holiday thinks nothing of going to America, getting across from Liverpool to New York in seven days—about the same time it would have taken to go to the North of Scotland and back, travelling day and night continuously by mails or coaches.

Coming nearer home, and descending to the humble transit from London to Gravesend of those desirous of 'spending a happy day' at Rosherville Gardens, the only means of arriving at that Elysium was either by coach along the road, occupying nearly three hours, or by one of the rival companies' steamers, which in those days were distinguished as the *Star* and *Diamond*, the funnels of the vessels being painted in black and white, so as clearly to denote to which company they belonged. They were wooden boats, and very different from the fast-cutting iron vessels now employed in the same service. The Gravesend coaches were not very numerous, especially if you omit the long ones

running to Dover; their fares, too, were considerably higher than the steamers; and then on the coaches the passengers could not have the 'tea and shrimps,' which seemed to form an indispensable adjunct to the trip by water.

The Dover Road was never distinguished by any very fast coaches on it, the short distance from London, only seventy-one miles, rendering a high rate of speed unnecessary to accomplish the journey in the day; and the road being hilly, was against coaches being timed at a very fast pace. Perhaps about the fastest on that road was one of Chaplin's, the 'Tally Ho,' which went from the Spread Eagle in Gracechurch Street to Sittingbourne, forty miles, every day, including Sundays. It reached town between ten and eleven at night, was a favourite conveyance, and largely patronized by the Kentish farmers, who could leave their homes at five or six o'clock on Sunday afternoon, get their night's rest, and be on the spot for the early markets in London at Smithfield or Mark Lane. Cattle and sheep were then driven through the streets on Sunday night to market, and away from it all day during Monday; and the notorious bull in a china shop was then not unfrequently an actual fact, as many shopkeepers in the streets about Smithfield could testify to their cost and annoyance.

Recurring to the time a journey from Scotland to London used to occupy, the directions issued by a large hotel proprietor for the benefit of his patrons may not be out of place. In addition to the towns to be passed through, together with the names of the inns, innkeepers, and distances from place to place, which I give below, he informed the 'nobility, commercial gentlemen and the public' that he had constantly on hand 'an extensive stock of the finest old wines, spirits, etc., etc.' Last, but not least, he further informed them that there were 'excellent stables and coach-houses' attached to his establishment, with 'handsome post-chaises with dickies, superior horses, and careful drivers.' What the 'handsome post-chaises with dickies' were like I don't quite know; they certainly must have been a departure from the orthodox English old post-chaise, which had no sort of convenience at the back, either for the conveyance of luggage or passengers; indeed, there were sometimes rows of spikes across the hind axle, so that no boys or casual foot-passengers along the road could jump up behind and sit on it. The dickies referred to probably corresponded with what used to be called 'the rumble,' and were seats at the back of gentlemen's private travelling-carriages, intended for the conveyance of James and Mary Ann, who travelled with their master and mistress—the occupants of the

inside of the carriage. In such cases the footman had to pay for the post-horses at the different changes, the post-boys, turnpikes, and all incidental disbursements during the journey, without troubling his master.

The innkeeper's plan of stating the distance from one place to another was attended with this advantage, that it enabled the traveller at once to ascertain the correctness of the charges made for posting, which was always calculated by the mile. On a main road there were always milestones; the distance was well known, and easily checked if any extra charge were made. On cross roads, however, where there were not always milestones, I fancy the postmaster's miles were occasionally very short—a road which by actual measurement would have made only ten miles being by the elasticity of the postmaster's conscience extended to twelve, very much in the same way as in the measurements of his liquids he sold by the 'reputed pint' or 'quart,' the one being a trifle over an imperial half pint, and the other somewhat over the imperial pint. Be it clearly understood, however, that I do not for a moment impute dishonesty to the race of old innkeepers, for whom I entertain a high degree of veneration, having every reason to do so, after a somewhat lengthened personal acquaintance with them.

THE TRAVELLERS' GUIDE.

From Edinburgh to London.

Towns.	Inns.	Innkeepers' Names.	Miles.
To			
Haddington	Bell	Mitchell	17
Dunbar	Lauderdale Arms	Murray	11
Renton	Renton Inn	Mitchell	14
Berwick	King's Arms	Mitchell	16
Belford	Bell	Sanderson	15
Alnwick	Swan	Wilson	14
Morpeth	Queen's Head	Sunderland	19
Newcastle	Queen's Head	Dodsworth	14
Durham	Wheatsheaf	Ward	15
Rushyford	Wheatsheaf	Hoult	9
Darlington	King's Head	Scott	9
Northallerton	Golden Lion	Hurst	16
Boroughbridge	Crown	Fretwell	19
Wetherby	Angel	Clementshaw	12
Ferrybridge	Swan	Hall	17
Doncaster	Angel	Day	15
Barnby Moor	Bell	Clarke	14
Scarthing Moor	Black Lion	Pearce	12
Newark	Kingston Arms	Lawton	12
Grantham	Angel	Dunhill	14
Witham Common	Bull	Sturtle	10
Stamford	George	Fawcett	10
Stilton	Bell	Potts	14
Buckden	George	Scarborough	14
Biggleswade	Sun	Knight	14
Stevenage	Swan	Cass	14
Hatfield	Salisbury Arms	Bryan	12
Barnet	Green Man	Newman	9
London	...	...	12
			395

Directions such as these must have been very useful to a stranger performing a long journey at

the time when they were issued, which was in the year 1832. Knowing the names of the different inns along the road at which to stop, and if desired remain for the night, was also a convenience, and reminds one of a somewhat similar plan adopted on Taut's map of the Thames, where a drawing of an egg-cup attached to any place indicates that beds are provided there.

I could say much of the comfort and hospitality one used to meet with at the innkeepers' houses.

J. Sturgess del. et lith.

Hanhart imp

PROCESSION OF MAILS ON THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

CHAPTER IV.

PROCESSION OF THE MAILS.

A good deal has been written from time to time about the procession of mail-coaches running out of London, which used to take place annually on the birthday of the reigning sovereign.

It assembled in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where such a display would, in those days, create a considerable sensation. These were not the meets of a four-in-hand coaching club such as we have now, and although they were in some respects similar, the procession of the mails was not such a fashionable sight. There was, moreover, less occasion for crowding together either of carriages or spectators on foot; from the circumstance of the procession passing through some of the squares and principal thoroughfares at the West End, the residents of houses on the route could see the whole display from the balconies or windows of their own houses.

A printed official programme for the order of the procession was issued by the Earl of Lichfield for the

17th of May, 1838, he being the Postmaster-General. In order to render the procession more imposing, a horseman was placed here and there, and in front of some of the coaches, as appears in the programme, which ran thus :

ORDER OF THE PROCESSION

OF

HER MAJESTY'S MAIL COACHES, 17TH MAY, 1838.

	Two Horsemen.		
Liverpool	Chaplin	Swan with Two Necks.	
Manchester	„	„	„
	A Horseman.		
Bristol	Chaplin	„	„
Devonport	„	„	„
	A Horseman.		
Halifax	Chaplin	„	„
Holyhead	„	„	„
	A Horseman.		
Portsmouth	Chaplin	„	„
Stroud	„	„	„
	A Horseman.		
Edinburgh	Sherman	Bull and Mouth.	
Exeter	„	„	„
	A Horseman.		
Glasgow	Sherman	„	„
Leeds	„	„	„
Worcester	„	„	„

Bath - - -	- Chaplin	- Spread Eagle, Gracechurch Street.
Hull - - -	- ,,	- ,, ,,
	A Horseman.	
Norwich, by Ipswich	- Chaplin	- ,, ,,
	A Horseman.	
Lynn and Wells -	- Fagg	- Bell and Crown.
Poole, by Southampton	- ,,	- ,, ,,
	A Horseman.	
Dover - - -	- Horne	- Golden Cross, Charing Cross.
Gloucester - -	- ,,	- ,, ,,
	A Horseman.	
Hastings - -	- Gray	- Bolt in Tun, Fleet Street.
Louth, by Boston	- Mountain	- Saracen's Head, Snow Hill.
	A Horseman.	
Birmingham - -	- Hearn	- King's Arms, Snow Hill.
Brighton - -	- Gilbert	- Blossoms Inn, Lawrence Lane.
	A Horseman.	
Norwich, by Newmarket	- Nelson	- Bull Inn, Aldgate.

The above coaches will assemble in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and proceed [here follows the route at the West End], returning to St. Martin's le Grand into the North Gate of the Post Office Yard.

GEORGE LOUIS,
Surveyor and Superintendent.

On the day of the procession Messrs. Vidler and Parratt, the contractors for supply of the mail-coaches,

used to send the proprietors and others of their friends invitations, which in the King's reign ran thus:

KING'S BIRTHDAY.

Messrs. Vidler and Parratt request the pleasure of Mr. ..... company on Thursday, the 28th May, to a cold collation at 3 o'clock, and to see the procession of the Mail Coaches.

Mill Bank Row,
Westminster.

This probably was the most agreeable communication that the London proprietor received from Messrs. Vidler in the course of the year, the others consisting of bills drawn upon him quarterly, at three, six, or nine months, and sent to him for acceptance, drawn in advance for the amount that would be due from the proprietor as mileage for the use of the mail-coaches furnished by Messrs. Vidler under their contract with the Postmaster-General: they did not, however, consider him as actually guaranteeing the payment of the mileage. With the London proprietors Messrs. Vidler did not find any difficulty, but they did sometimes with those in the country, when, as a last resource, Messrs. Vidler applied to Mr. Johnson, the superintendent at the General Post Office, and a letter from him generally had the desired effect.

When a fresh mail was put upon a road out of London, Messrs. Vidler drew bills upon the London proprietor at three, six, and nine months in anticipa-

tion; after the expiration of that time they drew upon him quarterly, but still in advance. In order, however, to provide against the contingency of the mail being taken off the road, or the coaches not being duly provided, B. W. Horne, of the Golden Cross, used to take the precaution, when the bills were left at his counting-house for acceptance, of writing across them, 'For work if done.' So if there was no mail there was no bill to pay.

The other claim which Messrs. Vidler used to make on the proprietors was in what were called their bills for incidents, sent in once or twice a year for broken glass, splinter bars, or minor accidents, which might occur from the mail running against anything and being damaged. Unlike the arrangements entered into between the coach-proprietors and coach-builders for providing their ordinary stage-coaches, the latter furnished the leader-bars, whereas on the mails the proprietors furnished them.

The procession was certainly a gay spectacle, with either entirely new or newly painted and varnished coaches, and as about thirty-six new ones were built every year, it could be easily arranged that they should make their first appearance on the day of the annual procession. This was all Messrs. Vidler's part in it.

Next came providing the horses to draw the coaches,

and the harness, which was also new, or nearly so. This devolved on the proprietors who horsed the mails, and they were by no means behind-hand in making a display in their department. Many horses, if not entire teams, if a proprietor had not a sufficient number of showy ones, such as he wished to appear in the mails he horsed, were borrowed, and gentlemen who had their own four-in-hands would, it was said, sometimes lend them for the occasion, feeling rather proud of this opportunity of exhibiting them. This completed the next part of the procession.

Lastly came the uniforms of the guards and coachmen. These were provided by the Postmaster-General, and were the same as may be seen at the present day worn by the guards on the mail-trains. All the guards were provided with uniforms, in which they were required to appear nightly at the General Post Office, St. Martin's le Grand, ready to go out with their mails; but only the coachmen whose turn it might be to go out with the mails on the night of the procession were provided with uniforms, towards the expense of which I believe they had to make some contribution.

The original Mr. Vidler, together with his successors and partners, Messrs. Parratt, had a monopoly in the supply of the mail-coaches throughout the kingdom for a great many years; the Bristol mail,

the first out of London, was started in 1784, and in the year 1827 the contract was with the firm of Messrs. Vidler and Parratt, Mr. Vidler, who died in the previous year, having, it was said, had the contract for upwards of forty years; and it continued in the hands of Vidler and Parratt up to the year 1836, when the alteration was made in the build of the coaches, and the country divided into three districts, as suggested by Mr. Louis, surveyor and superintendent of mail-coaches at the time the alterations were in hand. The districts he recommended were:

Southern - - - -	4,644 miles.
Midland - - - -	5,350 „
Northern - - - -	3,288 „
Total - -	13,282

In 1835 the number of miles performed by Vidler's mail-coaches per day was upwards of thirteen thousand, comprising nearly the whole of the mail-roads in England and Scotland. It is evident that the contractors must have made a good thing out of the mail-contracts at not less than threepence a mile, besides the annual charge of about £2,400 for oiling, greasing, and taking the coaches backwards and forwards from their factory to the inns from which they started.

The throwing open the contract for the supply of mails in future, together with some other differences

with the Postmaster-General, appears to have given Mr. Vidler some annoyance, and from what was considered his extraordinary conduct, a recommendation was made to the Treasury not to accept any tender from him; thus terminated in 1836 the connection between his firm and the Postmaster-General, which had existed for about fifty years.

Not exactly connected with the procession of the mails, but with the passing of the day mail on its way up from Dover to London, is the following anecdote by a gentleman who was a passenger at the time. I cannot do better than give it in his own words:

'The mail was supposed to belong to the Queen —Her Majesty's mails—and everyone had to make way. I saw a great lark at Chatham. The soldiers were marching down the military road which crossed the main road. Traffic always stopped for the soldiers: the mail could not get through, and Elwin, the guard, with whom I was sitting behind,* insisted on the Queen's right. "D—— the soldiers! drive through them, Watson!" he cried to the coachman. So the coachman went for them, and the soldiers had to give way, amidst a fair amount of bad language from the officers, which was freely and smartly returned by the guard and one or two passengers, especially as the officer had a glass in his eye.'

* The Dover day mail, as also the Brighton, used to carry passengers behind on a seat facing the guard.

J. Sturgess del. et lith.

Hanhart imp.

INSISTING ON THE QUEEN'S RIGHT. +++, *"Drive Through Them Wilson!"*

CHAPTER V.

PIKES AND MILESTONES.

Pikes—but not the animal that voraciously seizes the bait of the angler, and the singular and plural of which seems to be the same, as you never hear a man say he caught so many pikes, but only so many pike or brace of pike.

The pikes on which I purpose making a few observations are what we used to see erected at various places along the roads where we travelled, and to which our notice was particularly attracted by the circumstance of having, if travelling in a vehicle or on horseback, to shell out, as it was commonly called—*i.e.*, to pay toll. Among persons in ordinary conversation they were denominated turnpikes, but they were also known by the shorter term in common use down in the country districts of 'pike,' while a post-boy almost invariably called them 'gates;' and if you asked him before starting in a post-chaise what tolls there were to pay, he would tell you there were two or three gates, and that you paid at such a

gate, and that cleared the next, and then you had to pay again at the next gate. The pike was also a standard of locality or distance in rural districts, as on your inquiring of an intelligent native or any local cottager the whereabouts of a place or the distance to it, he would probably inform you that it was near the pike, or the first turn after you got through the pike, nearly opposite the pike, or a mile from it. If you chanced to be in Somersetshire, and made inquiry as to the way of the agricultural labourer, you would very likely get some such answer from him as the following; but as everyone is not conversant with Somersetshire dialect, I subjoin a translation. Inquiring pedestrian: 'Which is the way to Satterly village?' Agricultural labourer: 'Ye do gar alang thic thar h'rod till e' d' cum handy to the pike, then e' d' tarn arf to the laft and kape arn for aboot of a haff-marl ar nigh apon dree-quarters aboove the gite as do stand agin the public housen, and thar 'ell zee a vinger-post as 'll pint the wi.' Which being translated is—You go along up this road till you come handy to the pike, then you turn off to the left and keep on for about a half-mile or handy upon three-quarters above the gate that stands against the public-house, and there you'll see a finger-post that will point the way.

The origin or institution of turnpikes is, I believe,

wrapt in some mystery; before they were established the inhabitants of the various parishes through which roads or highways passed were bound to repair them, but under some ancient system of tenures the lord of the soil frequently claimed the privilege of receiving tolls from all who travelled along his highway. Nor was this esteemed a mere bounty, for he was liable, in consideration of such toll, to keep the way in good order, and in some places even to defend the passengers from depredation. Acts of Parliament relating to turnpikes are to be found in the reign of George II., and indeed earlier; but in the reign of George III. an Act was passed, which was known as 'The General Turnpike Road Act.' This, however, was superseded by the General Turnpike Act now in existence, passed in the reign of George IV., and embodying the provisions of the previous repealed Acts.

In addition to the tolls which constituted a fund for the maintenance of the roads, there also was the benefit derived from what was known by the term of 'statute labour,' which imposed upon certain persons the duty of providing an amount of labour or cartage of materials in the course of the year, or payment of a composition in money in lieu of it. Statute labour and money compositions in lieu of it for the three years previous to 1837 amounted to upwards of

forty-two thousand pounds; but it was shortly afterwards done away with, although from the circumstance that many parties in the country were unaware of this fact, they continued doing the work or paying the composition. The turnpike surveyors were only too glad to avail themselves of any ignorance on the subject, to continue this aid to the roads as long as they could, especially as tolls were greatly diminishing in almost every direction, consequent upon the opening of additional railways, the road traffic being thus diverted, and the amount of the tolls, of course, falling off.

The total of bonded and floating debts of the turnpikes in 1836 amounted to about a million and a half, and among the large number of trusts throughout the kingdom some were in a flourishing condition and able to meet their annual payments, including the interest on their bonds, and keep their roads in repair; but others were in a vastly different state, and Sir James McAdam, the famous road-surveyor, once stated that he knew some roads upon which there were sixty years of interest due. It was the practice upon many trusts to convert unpaid interest into principal, granting bonds for the unpaid interest as principal, thereby increasing the yearly sum to be paid for interest; and as long as the creditor got a bond, he looked forward to its being paid by the

public or the Government in some shape at some time or other. It is needless to say that in many instances these hopes have proved altogether delusive. As you travel along any of the main-roads from London —north, south, east, or west—you will every here and there come to a small square brick building, probably a mile or some miles from any town, and a considerable distance from even a village. The bicyclist or youthful pedestrian wonders what on earth can have induced any man to erect a cottage in such an out-of-the-way place, and bewilders himself in considering what advantage is likely to accrue to any person occupying a cottage in such a locality. This probably leads him to make inquiry of the inhabitant, or if, as is not unlikely, the cottage is locked up, and the inhabitant gone to his daily labour, resort is had to the first person met along the road. The inquirer is then informed that it was originally built for a turnpike-house, and that many years since a turnpike-gate—or, as it will doubtless be called, 'a pike'—used to stand there. All traces, however, of anything like a gate, together with the gate-posts, and board containing a table of the tolls which used to be taken, have long ago been removed, the cottage alone standing to mark the locality of the departed pike. By-the-bye, while mentioning the table of tolls, it has often occurred to me what an apparent

contradiction was sometimes published on these boards. At every turnpike there used to be affixed a large board painted very much after this fashion :

'SLOCUM TRUST.

'For every horse, mule, donkey,' etc., and after setting forth almost every description of animal likely to pass through a turnpike-gate, and the amount of toll to be paid in respect of each, and also a similar description of every kind of vehicle, and the tolls in respect of it, concluding with the short but expressive notice—

'NO TRUST.'

Although the turnpike trustees gave no trust, it will be manifest from the large amount of debts many of them were encumbered with that they did not fail to avail themselves of such opportunities as they possessed of obtaining trust, as many of their creditors to their sorrow eventually discovered. So long, however, as tolls were to be received, creditors had the power, if not paid their interest, of seizing the tolls and keeping them till their debts were paid, and this in priority to the appropriation of the tolls for the maintenance of the roads.

With the disappearance of the turnpike-gates the little document of ancient origin yclept a 'turnpike ticket' has also become unnecessary; the diminutive

piece of paper about the same size as a railway ticket, with the name of the gate and the side-bars which it cleared printed on it, is no longer put into our hands as we travel along the road. The trouble one had on arriving at the pike where the ticket was to be produced or given up, to fish it up out of one's pocket when one's fingers were numbed with cold or one's gloves drenched with rain, used, I fear, very often to cause one to give vent to anything but blessings on turnpike tickets or pike-keepers. On the other hand, some of the old pike-keepers could have told you that they knew from experience that boys going home from school in the old yellow post-chaises carried pea-shooters, and used them in passing through the pike if no stoppage was necessary, or after a start had been made again, totally regardless, too, of whether the pike-keeper were of the feminine gender. Stone-breakers by the side of the road could testify to a similar experience, as could also various pedestrians, whose only means of retaliation consisted, perhaps, in sending a stone rattling against the back of the chaise, on the principle of the man in the Black Country, 'Eave 'arf a brick at 'im.'

It is a curious fact that before the principal lines of railway were opened for any distance out of London, and tolls had very seriously diminished,

several persons supposed to have very extensive knowledge of the subject actually contemplated the possibility of railways eventually failing, and the roads then being found to have got out of condition, and perhaps into an almost useless state. It is scarcely necessary to point out the utter groundlessness of their apprehensions.

Nearly allied to the pikes were the old milestones which you used to meet with as you travelled along the road, but on the turnpike-roads only; measuring the roads in order to ascertain where milestones ought to be placed, and providing and keeping them in repair, I suppose made them too expensive to be erected on highways or parish roads. Hence their absence, greatly to the inconvenience of travellers, as those who had to traverse by-roads much must often have experienced.

The ideas of the rural mind as to distance are something extraordinary. It is by no means an unusual thing when you inquire of a rustic male or female how far it is to a given place, to be told the time it takes to walk there, in spite of entire ignorance as to whether your pedestrian capabilities may be those of a Weston able to do some six or seven miles an hour, or of a less expeditious character, compassing only three miles in the same period.

It is rather amusing if you chance to be walking on

a thoroughly rural cross road, where you meet but very few persons, to ask each of them the distance to the place of your destination, say four miles off.

Their answers will probably be after this style: No. 1, 'A little better than three miles.' You walk about half a mile, when you meet No. 2, who puts the distance down at 'about four miles;' while No. 3, whom you come upon about a hundred yards farther, will make it 'nearer three than four.' After walking another quarter of a mile it will probably be reduced by No. 4 to 'about two;' and as likely as not, the next one, No. 5, will return to the original distance, and put it down as 'handy upon four.' The result, I need scarcely observe, leaves you in an utter state of fog, removed only when you have actually walked the distance, and formed, as best you could, your own opinion upon it.

The general appearance of the milestones, even along the main-roads from London, is thoroughly venerable and in many instances somewhat dilapidated, especially those consisting wholly of stone, which seem to indicate entire neglect for many years past, and a necessity for having the letters and numbers recut and painted in order to render them legible even by close inspection. Many there are on which you cannot make out anything beyond a letter or two, or a figure here and there, the stone having become so

corroded and worn under the influence of the weather ; so that they have long ceased to be of the slightest assistance to persons travelling along the road. Those distance-indicators constructed of iron, with raised letters, are in a different condition, still being of service ; but many of them would be much improved if painted white, with the letters and figures black.

It seems a pity that these landmarks should be allowed to drift into a state of entire decay and uselessness, having originally been set up after considerable trouble and expense incurred in order to ascertain accurately the relative positions in which they were to be placed. Although so much of the traffic has gone off the main turnpike-roads, they are still used to a considerable extent in many parts, and the want of legible milestones is a source of much inconvenience to the travellers of the present time, albeit they are not so numerous a body as formerly.

The expense of the maintenance of what, under the present management of highways, are designated 'main-roads' being partly thrown upon Government funds, a sufficient sum could surely be provided to meet the trifling expenditure necessary to restore the milestones to a condition of utility. Not long since I saw two lying by the roadside, one bearing the date

1743; they merely wanted setting up again in the ground. In many places where there is a convergence of important roads, there are, if I may use the expression, elaborate milestones, indicating for the traveller's guidance the distances up and down the roads to the neighbouring places and London.

Such an one there is at Alconbury Hill in Huntingdonshire, just by Alconbury, near which was an extensive posting and coaching establishment, kept for many years by John Warsop—until, in fact, the railway, combined with the cheap travelling by steamer to Hull and other places which diverted the traffic from the road, abolished his business.

The heavy duties on post-horses made it quite impossible for postmasters to compete with the steamers, which were entirely free from duties of any description whatever.

During the session of Parliament, even after the steamers had considerably reduced his business, Warsop used to have fourteen or fifteen pairs of post-horses out in a day; at other times perhaps not half that number; while for two or three days, or for several days together, not a pair would be moving on the road. With the posting the coaching also of course fell off to a very great extent, and the stabling of horses going up and down the road, together with the company staying at the house, was lost.

Warsop said his custom consisted entirely of travellers going direct from north to south. He was not in a town, and had no other business whatever—no drinking company of any description. His business had depended totally on the nobility and gentry travelling; and sometimes, even if he had not much posting on the roads for several days and nights, his stabling was full of horses belonging to noblemen travelling with their own carriages from north to south, who subsequently journeyed by rail or steamboat.

To show the connection between Warsop's coaching and posting business, he said that if he had not been connected with coaching—which some years previously had cost him a great deal of money, and would have caused the sacrifice of an enormous amount if then given up—he could not have supported his posting establishment.

Without wishing to have the burthen of taxation removed from his own shoulders and placed on those of another, Warsop desired to be put on such a footing that he could convey noblemen and gentlemen and all travelling direct from the north. He had no other trade or business but that of occupier of the soil, and if he could not use the provender that he grew upon it, he could not live at his inn.

His opinion was that nothing but an entire abolition

of the post-horse duties could save him and men situated like himself, and enable them to increase their business on the road; then, gentlemen would travel from the north more frequently, and perhaps at times of the year when business in general was very dead, so that they would have an opportunity to compete with the steamers, and a certain number of customers might travel by road perhaps three times a year instead of once or twice.

I have given a somewhat detailed account of Mr. Warsop's position with regard to posting and coaching, as his inn stood just where two or three different roads to London met, in about as good a locality as could well be selected for a business like his.

For the information and benefit of travellers either passing by or stopping at his inn, it happened that a stone pillar stood near, much larger than the ordinary milestone; and as it contained full directions, I think that I cannot do better than give a copy of all that was inscribed on it:

To London 68 miles, through Buckden, Biggleswade, and Hatfield.
To Buckden - 7 miles.
„ Stilton - - 7 „

To London 64 miles, through Huntingdon, Royston, and Ware.
To Huntingdon - 5 miles.

To London 72 miles, through Cambridge.
To Cambridge - 21 miles.
„ Stilton - - 7 „

In order to show that Mr. Warsop was not alone in the opinion he expressed as to the severe pressure of the post-horse duties upon the postmasters, and the unfair competition with untaxed steamers which they had to contend against, I will quote what Mr. Cass, who carried on a large posting business at Stevenage in Hertfordshire, on the Great North Road, said :

He was obliged to keep up the same establishment, as there was a line of houses having the connection of families travelling, whom he was accustomed to receive from about the middle of July to September ; and all he wanted was to be put on an equality with travelling by steam. Although managing his business in the most economical manner, it would be impossible to continue without a chance of profit. Indeed, his trade would be entirely annihilated unless relief was afforded by the abolition of the duty. The property was his own, and but for that he could not continue to live there ; the business would not admit of his paying a rent for it.

If competition by steamers was having a ruinous effect on the traffic on the north roads, how much more so was it on the roads into Kent, where steamers were running from London—

To Gravesend for 1s. and 1s. 6d.
„ Dover - „ 5s.
„ Ramsgate „ 1s. 6d.
„ Boulogne „ 3s. 6d. and 4s.

From the much greater cheapness of travelling by steamer than by road, an endeavour was made to reach some point where the former mode of conveyance would be available—and thus persons travelling from Maidstone to London would go to Gravesend for half-a-crown, and thence to London for eighteenpence, paying only four shillings for the whole journey, whereas travelling the whole way by coach would cost six shillings.

With the duties removed the coach-proprietors considered that they might be able to compete with the steamers; but with the railways it was quite a different matter: they did not think any removal of duties would enable them to withstand such formidable rivals, and the correctness of this opinion was subsequently amply proved.

CHAPTER VI.

CONSTRUCTION OF COACHES.

I DO not propose to enter into a description of the different varieties of vehicles in use towards the end of the last century, and passing under the denomination of 'Flying Coaches,' 'Stage Chaises,' 'Glass machines hung on steel springs,' etc. They have been elaborately depicted in numerous illustrations to be found in old books treating of the travelling of the period; and from the length of time which has since elapsed I cannot, of course, give any account of them from personal knowledge, or add anything to what is contained in those works. The improvement of the roads naturally rendered more expeditious traffic practicable, and hence it became necessary to supersede the tremendously heavy and lumbering coaches by the introduction of some of a much lighter character, and capable of being drawn with safety at a greatly increased rate of speed. Ruts, or rather trenches, letting the wheels in up to the axles, so that six or more horses were required to

pull the ponderous coaches out, would have dragged the modern stage-coach all to pieces. It is somewhat curious that, although the stage-coach-builders endeavoured as much as possible from time to time to improve the construction of their coaches in order to make them light, strong, safe and appropriate for the conveyance of a number of passengers and their luggage, the mail-coach-builder made very little alteration indeed in those he built by contract for the Postmaster-General from the reign of George III. up to the time of the contract passing into other hands in 1836.

Previously, however, to adopting a new pattern, the Postmaster-General very properly consulted persons scientifically conversant with the construction of coaches and their various parts, especially the wheels, and also the leading stage-coach-builders in London, obtaining in this way a great deal of very interesting and valuable information. He observed, that in order to form right opinions on plans of coaches, he should begin by acquiring an accurate knowledge of the use of wheels. Nothing is more common, he said, than to meet with persons who have formed the most decided opinions on the construction of carriages, without having examined the properties of wheels, or being aware that they are treated by mathematicians as powers, and that all their properties

as such are exactly settled, and admit of no dispute among men of science; and hence he directed his attention to the height of the wheels of a coach, and whether the load should be principally over the fore or hind wheels. It was considered that large wheels diminished the labour of the horses in draught, so that it would be much more advantageous to make the four wheels of a coach nearly of the same size, especially looking to the fact that, according to the usual mode of loading coaches, the heaviest weight was on the small fore-wheels, pressing them deeper into the ground, and thereby very much increasing the labour of the horses. As the running of a coach well or otherwise greatly depends on the way in which the hind-wheels follow the fore ones, and as this depends in some degree upon the length of the perch, it was said that the perch should be made as short as it could with safety, regard being had to the greater tendency of a coach to upset with a short perch than with a long one. While on the subject of wheels, the breadth of the tires naturally came under notice as a very important feature. The tires of the mails were then one inch and three quarters in breadth, while some of the heavy slow coaches had tires two inches and a quarter broad, but the fast coaches one inch and a half.

The desirability of using springs was a point that

received a good deal of attention, not only as regarded the ease and comfort of the travellers, but as facilitating the draught and getting the coach over all obstructions, preservation of the roads, safety of the goods conveyed, and duration of the carriages. The advantage of springs was said to be equal to one horse in four—by no means inconsiderable, and showing that the interior of the old mail-coach could not have been a very comfortable place for a long journey. I cannot do better than give an account of it by a gentleman who, from his minute details, must, I think, have gained his knowledge from practical experience. He said:

'Much requires to be done to improve the mail-coaches so as to render them less fatiguing to travellers going long distances. The whole weight of a traveller's body is supported on the projecting bones at the root of the spinal column, which itself is unsupported throughout its whole length, as from the perpendicular back given to the seats the shoulder-blades are the only parts of the body which can touch them. If in the new coaches the seats should be of the breadth proposed, and if they are made one and a half inches higher in front than at the back, then the whole of the thigh will find support, and by the action of its muscles much relief will be given to the other parts. A

considerable rake or slope should be given to the backs of the seats, and the stuffing should be so arranged as to support the lumbar vertebræ, which are always those which suffer most on a journey. Much also may be done to give relief to the traveller by improving the hand-straps: long pendulous straps with their loops adjustable to different heights would give great relief by affording a rest for the elbow of an arm passed through them.'

The defects above pointed out sufficiently indicate that the journey of an inside passenger from Edinburgh to London, occupying a period of forty-five hours and thirty-nine minutes, must have been attended with a great amount of physical discomfort, doubtless causing great mental irritability and disquietude. Unions with their 'outdoor relief' and 'indoor relief' did not exist in those days, although they were just coming into use; but I should think that through passengers for a long journey inside a mail must have stood much more in need of some indoor relief than many of the inmates of unions.

Clearly the time had arrived when the construction of the mails was about to undergo alterations in which improvements for the inside were not to be lost sight of. Indeed, a large coach-builder in London admitted that the convenience of travellers

had been very little attended to in arranging the size of the bodies and the height and depth of the seats inside the mails.

Among the persons consulted by the Postmaster-General on the construction of coaches, was Dr. Lardner, a highly scientific man; Sir Henry Parnell, who had given a good deal of attention to the subject; and Mr. Peter Purcell, an extensive coach and mail builder in Dublin.

With reference to the improvements which had taken place in the roads under McAdam and Telford, Dr. Lardner was of opinion that a corresponding change had not been made in the form and structure of the carriages running upon them, which had not received the benefit of the application of the same scientific skill. In addition to his remarks as to the size of wheels, the breadth of tires, and the advantages of efficient springs, he considered that the mode in which the load should be placed on a coach should be in proportion to the size of the wheels, and hence that a greater part of it should be thrown on the hind-wheels. Sir H. Parnell concurred in this, and although it was the practice of the coach-proprietors to load the front-boot with heavy luggage, scientific men said the bulk of the luggage should be kept as far behind as possible, nothing but carpet-bags and light

packages being put into the fore-boot, so that the weight should whenever practicable be over the hind-wheels; and with the view of still further securing this object, an iron frame projecting from the bottom of the hind-boot should be fixed so that extra mail-bags and heavy luggage might be packed to the full height, if necessary, of the top of the guard's seat.

This plan, however, seems to have omitted any provision against the risk of the bags being cut off and carried away in the darkness of the night.

In order to try the draught of carriages a Mr. McNeill invented an instrument which was found to be so perfectly fit for the purpose, that experiments could be made with a certainty of affording accurate results. The instrument could be fixed to a coach to which the horses were harnessed, and showed the actual force or labour they exerted in drawing. The expense, however, of the experiments, about a hundred pounds, was more than private individuals chose to incur, although it was asserted that this would soon be repaid by the saving which would be effected by diminishing the labour of horses in drawing stage-coaches, and consequently the expense of providing and maintaining a sufficient number of them. The coach-proprietors did not care to take the matter up, being satisfied apparently with the

existing system; and the Government being only concerned in the construction and management of the mail-coaches, did not think it worth while to undertake experiments and incur expenses which in the end would be principally, if not entirely, for the benefit of the coach-proprietors. Sir Henry Parnell thought that a series of experiments ought to have been made by the Government; that the expense of conveying the mails might be diminished, and the travelling by mails increased, by improving the construction of the coaches. Mr. Purcell, in his observations furnished to the Post-master-General on mail-coaches, referred principally to the advantages of coaches without perches; and he went rather fully into the subject, giving some instances derived from his long and extensive practical experience as a builder. He said: 'The coach without the perch possesses three important advantages over the plan of the mail-coaches now in use, in point of weight, safety, and economy. They can be made lighter by doing away with the perch and other parts with iron attached to them. A coach may be made nearly two hundredweight lighter; the body and boots do not require to be made stronger for a mail-coach without a perch, and as the weight of the fore-carriage is about equal in either case, the additional weight of the perch, beds and

ironwork belonging to them is avoided. In the second place, a greater degree of safety is obtained by this plan; the coaches are not so liable to overturn, either when running in a direct line, or upon the lock for the purpose of turning.' This he said he had proved by experiment as well as by observation of the number of accidents which had occurred. The plan of coaches without perches, he said, was not only more economical in building, but at the same time a great saving in necessary repairs. The fore-carriages with perches were continually getting out of repair, the ironwork getting loose, wearing out, or breaking in a short time of running. As a contractor he experienced great inconvenience from being compelled to adopt the plan of the mails, not only from the heavy expenses to which he was subject, but from the great trouble and difficulty of keeping the coaches in an effective state in consequence of the immense repairs necessarily attendant on perch-coaches.

By way of confirmation of his opinion as to the great advantages of the coaches without perches, he gave some instances in his business, one being of a day coach he had had in use for eight years without any of the timber being renewed. For the Cork mail—running with twelve outside passengers, including coachman and guard, he furnished large coaches

for the purpose of carrying the luggage, etc., some with and some without the perch, and found the great difference between them. Those without perches required very little attention or repair; the others as they came in required extra repairs, attended with much expense in order to keep them in a fit state.

Mr. Purcell also gave a comparative statement of the running upon the two plans, viz.: The day mail going to Belfast, carrying twelve outside and four inside passengers, and weighing eighteen hundredweight, was built without a perch. It ran for seven months without a bolt or nut stirring, and he expected would run for a great while longer without requiring anything to be done to it, the only expense having been the ordinary wear and tear of the wheels; but the mails, that carried only six outside passengers, including coachman and guard, were as heavy and constantly needed repair, and in the space of time mentioned a perch for a carriage might be worn out. The coaches without perches, too, were not so liable to accidents generally, or when they did occur were not attended with the same danger as the mails were subject to; for if an elliptic spring broke, it still continued connected in three out of the four points of connection, and the coach might safely travel to the end of its journey; or if an axle-tree broke

at any part between the springs, their strong fastenings would prevent the wheels getting away. On the contrary, if the same accident should happen to a perch-carriage, the wheel would leave it, and the coach would most likely upset.

Mr. Purcell appears to have gone very fully into the question of perch or no perch, and was evidently very strongly prepossessed in favour of the latter. The plan, however, was never tried in England, although Vidler, the contractor for supplying the mail-coaches, had about two hundred at work; and when a change was about to be made in the construction of the mails, and the contract was thrown open for public competition, the various large stage-coach builders built coaches each on their own model and plan. A premium of a hundred guineas was offered by the Government for the model or drawings and description of the best carriage, it being stipulated that while safety, speed and convenience were to be particularly attended to in the construction, the expense must be kept within moderate limits, so as not to exceed that of the best stage-coaches. Several models and designs were accordingly furnished, and some coaches built which were submitted to the Postmaster-General for his inspection in St. James's Square, on an appointed day; but there was only one without a perch, an Irish coach, which I

presume was built and sent over by Purcell. It was not, however, adopted; nor has the plan of dispensing with a perch, so far as I am aware, ever been tried for stage-coaches, or for mails in England.

Mr. McNeill at that time (1835) was surveyor of the road from London to Holyhead, and being present at the exhibition of coaches in St. James's Square, gave some valuable and interesting information to the Postmaster-General on the draught of carriage-springs, and the machine he had invented for testing the draught of carriages and the resistance on roads. He was not favourably impressed with the Irish coach, thinking that a mail-carriage should have a perch.

In the construction and weight of carriages there appears to have been a great difference of opinion and uncertainty, up perhaps to nearly the time when road-mails and stage-coaches were superseded by the railways. Persons who horsed the Holyhead mail, and also kept post-horses, often said that gentlemen's carriages, which they also horsed, weighed much more than mail-coaches or any stage-coaches. This must have referred to the time when the mail-coaches had been very much reduced in weight, from twenty-two or twenty-three hundredweight to little over seventeen.

The coach-masters undoubtedly were the persons most deeply interested in the adoption of any plan for facili-

tating the draught and diminishing it as far as possible for the benefit of their horses, and at the same time of their pockets. They were probably satisfied, so far as the mails were concerned, that the Postmaster-General, whose object it was to get the mails conveyed through the country as expeditiously as possible, should take all the trouble and responsibility of deciding upon the carriage to be adopted. Although the opinions and advice of the coach-masters as practical men no doubt would have been welcome and would have received due attention, yet after all the final decision rested with the Postmaster-General, and the coach-masters had no alternative but to put their horses to the coaches furnished to them.

There was one exception to the apparent indifference manifested by the coach-masters as to any improvements made either in the mails or stage-coaches; William Chaplin, the largest coach-proprietor in London, had a coach built with the fore-wheels of the same height as the hind-wheels. He took out a patent for it, and expended between four and five hundred pounds upon it; but, as he said, somehow or other he could not surmount the prejudice against it. It ran beautifully on level ground. How the turning was managed I could not understand. But I only saw it when at rest in the yard, and

I do not think it was ever put into practical use on any road.

If the coach-masters did not understand much about the scientific mechanical construction of coaches, or take much trouble to acquire that knowledge, the coach-builders do not seem to have been much better informed, as Chaplin said: 'I consider the fore-wheels in the mail-coach being higher, and the hind-wheels lower than in the ordinary coaches, is an improvement; and it becomes a question, which I have never yet met with anyone to solve, what would be the happy height to adhere to. The coachmakers are very good workmen, but there is not one in five hundred—or at least I never met with one—who could explain upon any mathematical principle, or any other sound reasoning, why the thing should be so or so. They are not great mechanics by any means; they have heard that a fore-wheel is better lofty, but none of them can tell you why.'

No very radical or extensive change seems to have taken place in the building of stage-coaches, such as dispensing with a perch or altering the number or mode of fixing the springs; but more improvements were made in the mails when the contract passed out of Mr. Vidler's hands, and the build was entirely altered—among other things in the springs,

the old plan of which is now only to be seen on what are called mail-phaetons, in consequence of their being after the pattern of the old mails.

When springs were first being used on public coaches, one of the objections urged against them was that they would make the coachman's seat so easy that he would always be asleep—a not improbable event certainly, in the days when they stopped at numerous public-houses on the road, and for not a short time either.

It is said, as regards the width between the wheels of coaches, that George Stephenson, the great engineer, fixed on the distance between the rails on the narrow gauge of railways, which is four feet eight and a half, from the old mail-coaches, considering that as the best standard of balance, combined with strength, speed and safety.

One would suppose that the engine-drivers and stokers, travelling many miles daily, would all be perfectly familiar with the breadth between the rails; but I was very much surprised, on inquiring of several while on their engines attached to trains, to find that some had not the slightest, and others had most erroneous notions as to the space. I was rather amused by one man putting it down at once at six feet; and on my representing to him that it could not possibly be so much as that (I knew

from actual measurement what it was), he said, 'Well, that's what we always call it.' When I told him that that referred to the space between the up and down rails, he replied that he supposed it did; but as to the actual measurement, neither he nor his stoker possessed the least notion. Two of the drivers of whom I inquired gave the correct dimensions exactly, even to the half inch.

CHAPTER VII.

COACH PROPRIETORS.

Reminiscences of the old roads would be very imperfect without some mention of the persons whose business consisted in promoting public traffic along them by providing the means of locomotion from place to place. This was done by the mail and coach proprietors and postmasters, a most important branch of the community in those days, and large contributors to the National Exchequer in the shape of payment of the heavy duties imposed in various ways on their business, independently of similar taxes levied upon them in their capacity of innkeepers, a business carried on by nearly all of them in combination with coaching.

It is rather singular, and may seem somewhat contradictory, that the improvement of the roads, while it greatly facilitated the coaching-work, acted prejudicially to the innkeepers in some respects.

The improvement of the roads enabled them to send their coaches along at a speed that would have

been perfectly impossible in the days when the roads were so bad that additional strength had to be resorted to in order to extricate vehicles which had sunk up to the axles in deep ruts and quagmires; but the pace being increased, a better class of horse was necessarily employed, and the greater the speed the greater the wear and tear of their stock.

With the increased pace travellers began to be impatient of long and unnecessary delays on the road and constant stoppages at road-side inns, chiefly, if not entirely, for the purpose of getting something to drink; because at this inn some speciality in the way of fluid was to be obtained, and at that the landlord, or it might be the landlady, was a particular friend of the coachman, so it would not do to pass by the house every day without stopping. It soon became manifest to the travellers that it was of no use to increase the pace of the coach if so much time was to be wasted in needless stoppages, or an unreasonable time allowed where they were necessary for the purpose of changing or taking meals on long journeys; thus the number of the stoppages being decreased, the innkeepers at whose houses the changes took place were obliged to send on the coaches as quickly as possible, without time being allowed for taking refreshment or doing anything for the good of the house; so some part

of the custom which had arisen from the coach was lost to the innkeepers on the road at places between those where the regular meals were taken. To promote further expedition the time appointed for meals was curtailed, breakfast or dinner being reduced from nearly an hour to five-and-twenty, or at the utmost thirty-five minutes, which was the time allowed on the Shrewsbury 'Wonder;' while on the Manchester 'Telegraph' twenty minutes only was granted, which was the time they all used to allow for breakfast.

To give even a short sketch of all the large coach-proprietors who used to be engaged in carrying on coaching business throughout the kingdom, would fill several volumes, if any individual possessed the requisite information, and was sufficiently well acquainted with the coaches on every road in the country. Few if any records are in existence as to the most important circumstances and localities; few also are the persons who could relate them from memory only, and their recollections would probably apply to very limited localities.

I purpose giving, as far as I can, some account of the large coach-proprietors of London, and of a few country ones of whom I can speak personally.

I may venture to mention their names without fear of causing them annoyance, or hurting their

feelings, for of all those I shall mention not one is now living. I shall, however, bear in mind the old motto, 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum.'

At the head of the list I put the name of *William Chaplin*, being the largest coach and mail proprietor in London, which of course means in the world, as he had three separate coach offices in the City, and, as usual with the City proprietors, an office at the West End for the convenience of passengers proceeding thence and wishing to book their places beforehand.

Originally a coachman, he eventually raised himself to the position of proprietor of a great number of mails and coaches, was elected a member of Parliament for Salisbury, and after the coaches were knocked off the road, became deputy-chairman of the London and Southampton Railway, partner of Mr. Benjamin Worthy Horne, with whom he carried on an extensive and well-known business as railway agents and carriers to the London and Birmingham Railway, under the style of Chaplin and Horne.

In alluding, however, to Mr. Chaplin's connection with railways, I am getting on rather too much ahead, as that did not take place until after his coaching business had ceased. At the Swan with Two Necks, in Lad Lane, he succeeded William Waterhouse, who had carried on the business there

ever since the year 1792. The Swan with Two Necks, though, is of much older date, as in an interesting book on sign-boards it is said, 'The Swan with Two Necks is a corruption from Nicks. In 1556 the Swane with ij Nekes at Mylke Street End.' In imitation, I suppose, of the mail-coach halfpenny, Waterhouse had a medal struck of about the size of a halfpenny with a swan with two necks stamped on it, and this inscription, 'Payable at the mail-coach office, Lad Lane, London. W. W.' I have at various times travelled and conversed with many of Mr. Chaplin's coachmen and guards, but have not heard any one of them speak unfavourably of him, and as a proof of his not forgetting those who had been in his service, he subsequently availed himself of the opportunities he had of putting them into situations as guards or station-masters on the railway. His countenance certainly was expressive of kindness, but he had, I have understood, although I never heard him exercise it, the power of giving utterance to language more forcible than eloquent when he considered it necessary. His character is thus sketched by a man who was once in his employment as a coachman :

'Downright industry and a systematic application to business, in which the female members of the family were called to assist, formed the foundation of

his elevation. Well up in the practical part of his vocation, which he followed professionally for years, he had a very good knowledge of the animals he governed as well as the bipeds with whom he was associated, and made them both subservient to his designs. To the employment of an oratory he could at all times most powerfully use, though it was not adapted to the atmosphere of St. Stephen's, he added an intellect superior to most of his class in shrewdness and tact, and this with a soft, oily expression that procured for him the sobriquet of "Bite 'em sly."

'It is but due to his memory to state that to his indefatigable perseverance, his application to business, his forethought and general capacity, is to be attributed the success of that Company, of which he was so long and deservedly the head, which for its efficiency, and its remuneration to the shareholders, ranks among the first railroad Companies in the kingdom. At his death he had accumulated nearly half a million of money, it is said—an immense sum for a coachman to realize—more, perhaps, than the industry and talents of any one man ought to realize; and to his lasting praise it must be recorded that he did not forget, but took pains to provide for many of his dependents, whose means of subsistence were destroyed by the introduction of the new method of travelling.'

He was deputy-chairman of the South-Western Railway, and in the absence of Mr. Garnett, the chairman, from the half-yearly meeting of the Company, in August, 1841, held at the then terminal station at Vauxhall, it devolved upon him to take the chair, when he 'craved the indulgence of the meeting for himself in his first essay at chairmanship,' and in the course of his speech with reference to the mail-packets from Southampton, said he had had experience in the transmission of her Majesty's mails, and could assure the meeting that had it not been that the conveyances were popular, very little beyond empty honour would have been the result; and further, in the course of his speech touching on the punctuality of the trains, he said: 'If they looked at the pressure on particular trains, they would not feel surprised that a good deal of time was occasionally consumed on the road. The parties who frequented the South-Western Railway were not principally commercial men, with their watches in their hand, and punctual to a minute, but ladies with children and bonnet-boxes, who required and, he hoped, received every attention (a laugh), so that it was really under such circumstances wonderful that so little delay occurred,' which produced from the meeting cries of 'Hear, hear.'

A gentleman was staying with him at his seat,

near Basingstoke, one Sunday, when the clergyman took his text from the Proverbs of Solomon, and Mr. Chaplin afterwards remarked to him: 'That Solomon was a clever fellow. I should not like to have bought a horse from him without a written warrant.'

In 1835 his principal establishment was at the Swan with Two Necks, and he had about twelve hundred horses at work. Out of the twenty-seven mail-coaches leaving London nightly, he horsed no less than fourteen. They were:

Holyhead.	Norwich.
Devonport.	Hull.
Liverpool.	Bath.
Manchester.	Dover.
Bristol.	Poole and Southampton.
Halifax.	Stroud.
Portsmouth.	Lynn and Wells.

Some of these he horsed jointly with other proprietors. Altogether he horsed those mails for a distance of nearly 350 miles, which fully entitled him to say in his address to the shareholders of the South-Western Railway Company that he had had experience in the transmission of her Majesty's mails.

In those instances where he did not actually provide the horses, although he had signed the contract

with the Postmaster-General to cover the ground, he was obliged to find a sub-contractor to do it at a rate varying from twopence farthing to threepence a mile. After the first eighty miles he found no difficulty in getting persons to join in working them, things being so much cheaper; the principal pressure upon him was in finding partners to keep the mails moving with credit to himself and the office, at a distance from twenty to sixty miles from London.

The small parcel trade was one inducement to labour with the mails. There being no time allowed for refreshments within a short distance from town, there was not the breakfast or supper to be provided; and then coming at one or two in the morning, the innkeeper would not care to horse the mail. It being night-work both up and down, there was nothing besides the bare earnings to offer him as an encouragement, and private individuals did not much care to have their establishments disturbed in the night, although they probably would not object to horsing day coaches. Many persons besides innkeepers used to horse both mails and coaches.

Chaplin had about sixty-eight different concerns or coaching-lines, requiring for their service about two hundred coaches.

The opinion of a man so extensively engaged in

coaching is of some weight on the important subject, which was often discussed, of the desirability of the mail-guards being entirely paid by Government, whose servants they were; being of no service to the passengers except in so far as they expedited the mail on its journey by assisting to change horses at places where they were not occupied in the discharge of their official duties. That the passengers did not appreciate this trifling assistance sufficiently to induce them to fee the guards liberally may be gathered from Chaplin's remarks on the subject.

He said: 'I would suggest the propriety of letting the guards of the mails be entirely dependent on the Government for their support, because there is rather a dearth of that spirited kind of passenger to support the mails, except to such great places as Liverpool and Manchester; and I fancy it is chiefly because of the expense that the guards do not go such long distances with the mails as they do with the post-coaches, the guards of which generally go to Manchester or Liverpool, a distance of two hundred miles, while the mail guards seldom exceed a distance of a hundred miles; then it becomes a heavy tax upon the passenger to have two of these men to pay, and if it could be borne by the Post Office it would be a great inducement to many people to come by the mail, who do not do so now.'

When the conveyance of the mail-bags was transferred to the railways, the guards accompanying them were paid entirely by the Post Office; they had not the means of collecting fees from the passengers. But in other cases, where the mails were on the road, some of the guards were partly paid by the Post Office, and others wholly; so then they were prohibited from taking fees of the passengers.

The guards who were in the latter position received various sums as wages weekly, not exceeding in any instance one pound nine shillings and tenpence; and the total amount paid to them annually in this way was ten thousand eight hundred pounds.

They were appointed by the Postmaster-General.

As to the fees usually paid to the mail-guards between London and Manchester, Chaplin said: 'Some give perhaps half-a-crown; they cannot give less, or if they do the guard looks at them very hard. The guard expects half-a-crown when he gets to Leicester, and the same sum at Manchester. This very much increases the expense, and we have not the same sort of gentlemen to go with us who used to go before the accommodation of the day-coaches. The mails are very slackly supported, excepting in these populous districts; and if, therefore, we could render them more popular, we could work

them at a less expense. The first thing is to make them popular. We pay the guards from half-a-guinea to fifteen shillings a week; but we do that to make them our servants, and have a check upon their conduct.'

He further observed, with reference to the question whether passengers had a preference for the mail or stage coach, 'There is a great deal to be said on that. The mails unfortunately do not flourish, except in connection with very populous towns. Now, in Manchester and Liverpool, where there is a vast spirit of enterprise, they esteem the style of travelling by the mail, and we get a very good living; but with respect to places of minor importance, we cannot get a sufficient number of gentlemen or active merchants into the mail, and we are suffering very severely for want of inducements to the passengers to travel by it. It has occurred to me that some twenty years ago (1815), when the mails were established, and there were no day-coaches for distances of about one hundred miles, gentlemen invariably came from Bath and other such places by the mails, and then the passengers consisted of officers in the army, merchants and gentlemen; but now that day-coaches are established everywhere within a hundred and forty miles from London, all those passengers go by the day-coaches, and we

cannot find a sufficient number of mercantile men of spirit, who value their time, to give us increased fares to meet the limited number of passengers; and therefore the mails are very materially suffering, and also we are suffering a good deal of injury from the early hour at which the mails are required to be in London. That is very much against us.'

'The post-coaches from Bristol and Norwich, and other places, that can stop an hour and a half longer in the provinces, and are not obliged to arrive in London till nine o'clock in the morning, offer a very great accommodation; whereas people do not like the mail-coaches leaving earlier, and arriving before the hotels and private houses are open to receive them, and therefore I presume that to be one of the leading objections. Leaving London at eight at night operates excellently. The mails have all the preference. Most persons have brought their business to a close by eight o'clock; the dinner-hour is over, and a man, if he means to go, is ready at eight.

'The "Bath," which used to be the best mail in England, and supported by the best sort of persons, has become a very impoverished concern.'

This Chaplin said in 1835, about twenty years after the 'York House' coach had been started, and

at a time when there were about fifteen or sixteen day and night coaches, with two mails, running between London and Bath.

Referring to the terms 'large coach-proprietors,' sometimes made when applications were received by them from persons in a smaller way of business to join them in putting a coach on the road, he observed: 'There are circumstances in which a man would have sufficient influence to command a high price for anything that he chose to offer to people to join him in.'

'Mr. Brotherton, of Liverpool, for instance,' he said, 'is an exceedingly opulent man. He may have most of the large inns under his control, and he would lay down his own practice and say, "I will build my own coaches, and have such a price for them. If you want to work a coach from London to Liverpool with me, I have no objection, but I shall find the coach." It will,' said Chaplin, 'then be for us to consider whether his interest in the town to fill the coach is worth a sacrifice of so much a mile for his machinery.'

The stories of the road connected with Chaplin must have been numerous, and some of them no doubt very amusing; but I regret that I am unable to furnish many.

A man having separate concerns on every road

out of London, must doubtless have been subject to a good deal of the 'shouldering' process, or, as he mildly expressed it, the 'peculations' of his servants.

On the subject of the duties being so assessed that proprietors paid on a smaller number of passengers than the mail was capable of carrying, and thus had a vacant seat; but if they paid duty on the next rate in the scale, they would pay for more than they could carry, he expressed his opinion that the new mails were generally popular with and approved by the public, were more commodious and travelled well, but said: 'It would be better for the contractors if the mails were allowed to carry another outside passenger. By the last regulation of the Stamp Office the licenses run very unfortunately for the mails, because they are in gradations. We go from four to six, and six to nine. Now the mail carrying but seven passengers has to pay a penny a mile for the duty, although it can only take the one passenger over the six. We pay as much as if we took nine, and that compels us to have an idle capital. We are running along the country with four inside and two out; there is a vacant seat. We cannot reduce the number of horses, nor the wages of the servants, nor any one item in the expense, in proportion to the reduced receipts from that one passenger.'

'It would be a great convenience to us if we were allowed to take an additional passenger. In travelling through the country we require the benefit of the road trade. When we license upon the short number of four and two, if a person is going from one provincial town to another we cannot take him up; or if we do, it is encouraging our servants to peculate with our earnings: but we do not desire to take him, because of infringing the laws.'

'Having licenses for four and two, the servant is tempted to take a passenger up in the night journey, and sometimes in the day, having a vacant place; and if it be for a short distance, too frequently he keeps the money in his own pocket, or, in the phraseology of the road, "shoulders the passenger."'

'We frequently,' Chaplin said, 'particularly in winter, license only for six. At the commencement of winter the night-travelling is not so popular, therefore the outsides decrease, and we go away with a vacant seat every night. At Piccadilly, in going into the west of England, if a person wants to go as far as Windsor, or Salt Hill, if we do perchance take him up, there is a long passenger to Exeter lost; and if we have four and two, we are debarred from getting the accommodation necessary for our own welfare, or the public convenience. But

there are no coaches equal to many of the mails; even those coaches that run in the day cannot match them: but it is as much as the mail-contractors can do to keep up to the speed, and they will be obliged to make every exertion in their power to do so.'

By-the-bye, in reference to the accomplishment, or whatever it may be called, of 'shouldering,' there is a curious story told of a toast given by Chaplin at a dinner at which some guards and coachmen of his own were present. Coming from a large coach-proprietor, and in such company, the toast seems rather singular; but I have no doubt of the authenticity of the story, as I have heard it from more than two persons. It was: 'Here's success to shouldering, but do it well!' which I conclude meant, 'Don't let me find you out.'

In the following instance, however, the man was found out. It happened that a guard of the name of Jenks contrived to shoulder a passenger nearly all the way from Manchester; in other words, to convey the passenger up by the coach without his name being put on the way-bill, but receiving his fare, the whole of which he pocketed.

The rule used to be that the coachman and guard always shared short fares; but in Jenks's case there were changes of coachmen during the passenger's

journey, and they would not be aware that his name was not on the bill, hence the possibility of the guard's pocketing the entire sum.

Somehow or other the circumstance became known to the last coachman, to whom Jenks declined to hand over any portion of the plunder; and eventually an account of the whole proceeding reached Chaplin's ears. Jenks was sent for, and the case being fully proved against him—or it would perhaps be more correct to say; he having no means of controverting the charge, as Chaplin said to him: 'You have not only robbed your masters, but you have robbed your fellow-servant as well'—he was, of course, dismissed.

The occasional receipt of small sums from passengers for short distances, and not putting them on the bill, might be considered a custom tacitly assented to by the proprietors; as on a coach running a hundred miles or more, where there was plenty of room, no notice would be taken of a passenger being occasionally carried a few miles and putting two shillings or half-a-crown into the pocket of the coachman and guard, if there was one. Such a course rendered their situations worth more pecuniarily, and induced them to discharge their duties in a satisfactory manner.

At coaching dinners, when the proprietors used to

meet either on a sharing account, or to make arrangements for putting on a new coach, or altering any of the regulations relating to one on the road, there used to be a toast given by one of the endmen; and in that capacity I have no doubt Chaplin often gave it, though I do not suppose it originated with him.

There was sometimes a difficulty in getting men to horse a coach over the middle ground, where there was nothing to be got but a bare share of the earnings; and therefore it was often requisite to deal gently with these men and avoid giving them any cause of complaint which might terminate in their taking their horses off, when some one else had to be found to cover the ground, perhaps at a fixed rate higher than the other proprietors were receiving from the sharing. By way, therefore, of paying men in this position a small compliment, and making them feel satisfied with it, their health was proposed in the toast to 'The Middle Ground Men.'

Stoppages were often made by coachmen, especially those that had belonged to the old school, at places not appointed for refreshment or meals; and accordingly it was by no means unusual to find on a day-coach not worked very punctually as to time, that where a change of horses took place, or even in some cases where there was no reason or necessity for stop-

ping, the coachman would pull up at a small roadside inn for some five or ten minutes; and on going indoors you would find a cold joint and a loaf of bread, which the coachman would at once inform you there was time to have a cut at, and at the same time benefit his friend the landlord. According to this mode of proceeding it was the daily practice of one of Chaplin's coachmen to stop at the Magpies, at Harlington corner on the Bath Road, on his down journey, at about eleven o'clock, and occupy some ten minutes in getting luncheon, which he always found ready. It so happened that Chaplin rode down on the coach one day, when the usual routine was gone through, the coachman asking him if he would not take something. Chaplin observed that there was not any knife and fork on the table, when the coachman produced those articles, which he always carried with him, and offered them to him. As the coach was about starting again after some ten or fifteen minutes, Chaplin, knowing that such a time ought not to have been lost, there being properly no stoppage at all at the Magpies, quietly observed to the coachman that he supposed the time would be made up out of his horses, as it was clear from his being provided with his knife and fork that the delay was a daily occurrence. The coachman, named Trigg, did not continue in Chaplin's employment.

I don't think it often happened that there was a strange coachman and a strange guard on one of the mails out of London, neither of whom knew the road; but this once occurred with Chaplin, as from some cause with which I am unacquainted the regular coachman of the Halifax mail, which Chaplin horsed, was not on the coach, and it devolved upon Chaplin to take the reins. When he came near the place where he supposed there was a change, he asked the guard, who had only just been put on this mail, where the change was, but that functionary possessed no more knowledge on the subject than Chaplin himself; however, they managed, I believe, to get the mail through the country without any mishap or great loss of time. They would probably ask the horse-keeper at one stage where the next changing-place was; in addition to which the horses themselves would very likely pull up at the right spot, and by the instrumentality of the guard's horn the fresh horses would be found standing out in the road.

Of the eight mails that went out of Piccadilly nightly Chaplin horsed all but two, the Gloucester and Exeter; so that he had to send six mail-carts up there, each carrying a guard, with his letter-bags and post-office equipments, and for the performance of this service he charged in the accounts with his

J.Sturgess. del et lith

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NO FOUR HORSE HARNESS. GUARD EXTEMPORIZED AS A JOLLY POSTBOY.

partners in each mail an annual sum of thirteen pounds.

Chaplin's establishment at the Spread Eagle, in Gracechurch Street, was not so extensive, nor did so many of his best coaches start from there as from the Swan with two Necks. Most of his fast coaches into Kent and Surrey started from Gracechurch Street, whence they had greater facilities for getting out of London than at Lad Lane. Though Chaplin had not any of the coaches running the extreme distances in a day, such as to Shrewsbury and Manchester, or the two longest mails, such as the Edinburgh and Glasgow, yet he had the three fastest mails, the Bristol, Devonport, and Holyhead.

With regard to the pace of coaches generally, he said that many professed to perform ten miles an hour by day, nine miles an hour by night; but they were variable, and very rarely performed on an average more than nine miles and a half an hour by day, and eight and a half by night.

'There are a few, however,' he continued, 'which fully maintain ten miles an hour—the Brighton, the Exeter day-coach, and the Shrewsbury day-coach. Among the best I have are the Estafette to Manchester, leaving London at ten in the morning, nine miles and a half an hour; the Birmingham "Tantivy," by Oxford; the Bristol day-coach, etc.

'In fine weather they travel well, but with full loads and heavy roads they decrease in speed, and are not punctual like the mails.'

Both mails and coaches were accelerated in subsequent years.

To sum up, it may be said that Chaplin's business was conducted admirably, and he was sufficiently long-sighted to retire from it without losing so much money as many men in the same way of business did; for when it became clear that coaches must inevitably be superseded by railways, he sold his horses and threw his influence and connection into the railway companies.

I think I may venture to say that, so far from losing much money, he died a much richer man than he would have done had he continued in the coaching business.

Having given some account of the largest coach-proprietor, I will now proceed to give one of the man who, I believe, was unquestionably the second.

Edward Sherman succeeded Willans at the Bull and Mouth in the year 1823. He was said to have been a stockbroker, and how he came to embark in such a totally different occupation as coaching I cannot explain, but have no doubt the story was correct, as he was frequently to be seen in a tavern adjoining the Stock Exchange, in company with Lewis Levy, the

extensive farmer of turnpike tolls and post-horse duties, and several stockbrokers and other men connected with the Stock Exchange. He married three old ladies in succession. He rebuilt the Bull and Mouth, considerably enlarging it, and making stabling underground for a large number of horses, indispensable for the numerous coaches starting from his inn. These stables were kept nearly always full, day and night; for as the horses left them early in the morning to go out of London with the day-coaches, those bringing the mails and night-coaches into London in the morning soon filled them up again, until their departure with the night-coaches and mails left them vacant for the day-coach horses, who occupied them during the night.

Unlike Chaplin, Sherman had only one coaching establishment in the City; but he had the Oxford Arms Inn, in Newgate Market, whence his vans and waggons started, as he was engaged in this branch of road business as well, but kept it quite distinct from his coaching.

The sign of his coaching-house was originally Boulogne Mouth, signifying the harbour there, and it was a sign very frequently used after the capture of that place by Henry VIII. Gradually, however, it became Anglicised into the Bull and Mouth, a sign so completely adopted that when Sherman rebuilt the

house he put up outside it a stone head of a man, with a bull in his expanded mouth, which may be seen to this day. A painting of it was on the panels of the doors of his coaches, and sometimes on the door of the hind boot as well.

Being immediately opposite the entrance to the General Post Office yard, and at the end of Aldersgate Street, the situation of the Bull and Mouth was most favourable for traffic on the northern roads, to which Sherman principally directed his attention, increasing the number of his coaches to Birmingham from five, which he found running when he took the Bull and Mouth, to nine, the number he had on when the Birmingham Railway opened to Denbigh Hall; two or three were then immediately taken off, but he and his partners endeavoured to keep the others going till their profits were so diminished that the proprietors could not continue.

Sherman was the originator of the long-distance day-coaches, having begun with the 'Wonder' to Shrewsbury, 158 miles; the longest distances performed by day-coaches having previously been between 100 and 125 miles, from London to Bristol. This was subsequently followed by the Exeter 'Telegraph' day-coach, in which he had a share, the distance of this coach's running being 165 miles. In order, however, to eclipse anything that had ever been done before in the coaching

world, Sherman started the Manchester 'Telegraph' day-coach, doing 186 miles, or twenty-eight miles farther than the 'Wonder.'

Other proprietors followed in his wake, after this coach had suggested the idea of trying what was the greatest distance a coach could travel in a day, as an opposition was started to the 'Wonder;' and the Exeter coach was not put on by Sherman, though probably he was allowed to have a share in the concern in order to prevent his putting on an opposition.

In another respect Sherman was unlike Chaplin: I never heard of his driving a coach, and I rather think he could not do it; but his yellow four-wheeled headed chaise, with a small cob, and a double pair of reins, driven by himself, a boy or man generally accompanying him, was a familiar sight in the city. Why he had the double pair of reins I don't know, as the animal always seemed to be the most steady, quiet-going one possible, never evincing the slightest propensity to bolt. The turn-out altogether was unique, and one sure to attract attention, principally from the unusual colour of the carriage, the body and wheels, like those of nearly all his coaches, being yellow. There was nothing whatever 'down the road' or horsey in Sherman's appearance, but there was one thing about it then most unusual, although

very common at the present time—he wore a moustache, but not a beard.

If you saw a yellow coach in London, you might venture (although not sufficiently near to see the lettering on it) to predict that it was one of Sherman's; but if you could only get a glimpse of its shape there could no longer be the slightest doubt, as his coaches, some of which belonged to him, were built on a model totally different from any other coaches running out of London, being quite of the old-fashioned shape, such as you might see among the cross-country coaches on some roads a long way from town.

Sherman was the next largest mail-coach proprietor to Chaplin, and although covering only half the ground he did, had the very important mails carrying all the Scotch correspondence, as he horsed the Edinburgh and the Glasgow, also the Leeds, the Halifax conjointly with Chaplin, and the Worcester and Exeter, making six altogether, and the total number of miles 172. He had also the 'Wellington,' a coach running direct from London to Newcastle, and therefore taking a good deal of Scotch traffic, being the only road-coach that ran through for so long a distance. Other coaches there were on the same road, but running as far as York only, where a change of coaches took place, and perhaps of inns, too, if it happened that you

travelled from London to York by a coach terminating its journey there at an inn from which no coach went farther northward, in which case you would have to go to some other coach-office.

Among the coaches Sherman found running from the Bull and Mouth when he took to it was one which had been running for some years previously, but when it was originally started I cannot say. It was called the 'Subscription,' from London to Exeter, and was on the road in 1819, at which time it used to take twenty-five hours in performing the journey. Perhaps it is scarcely necessary to add that the coach was of a yellow colour. It was originally started by some sort of subscription, and hence the name.

I do not fancy that Sherman was a very great favourite with his country partners, as a large coach-proprietor and innkeeper down the North road, who horsed some mails with him, told me they had a difficulty in getting their shares of the earnings, the whole of the mileage for horsing the mails out of London being always paid to the London proprietor, to whom all his partners, including the man at the other end, had to look for payment of their several shares according to the length of ground they covered. He also used to charge his partners in the coaches for straw supplied, I suppose in the winter-time, to assist in keeping the

passengers' feet warm. He certainly had not any foot-warmers such as they have in railway-carriages either for the outside or inside passengers. He had also generally some other charges to make for supposed disbursements which tended to diminish the shares of his partners; added to which, I think in all those instances where his own peculiar build of coach was in use the vehicles belonged to him, and he received a mileage for their use of a farthing or halfpenny a mile more than a coachbuilder would have charged: but to this the country proprietors were obliged to submit, in order to secure his interest and connection, and the benefit arising from running to the Bull and Mouth in London.

The farthing or halfpenny a mile seems a very insignificant sum to mention, but when calculated upon each mile throughout the journey of a long coach, and daily throughout the year, it would amount to something considerable; and further, if charged upon a number of coaches running from the same establishment, would constitute an appreciable item in the gross receipts of the business.

With respect to time-keeping, even of very fast coaches, Sherman concurred with Chaplin as to their being necessarily influenced much by the state of the roads, as he said the keeping their time greatly depended upon that and the season; accordingly the

pace was moderated as occasion might require. This observation only applied to the coaches. For the mails there was no moderation of pace; they were obliged to keep the same time whatever the season, and notwithstanding that the greater part of their journeys was performed in the dark. The only obstacles which they were unable to overcome were fogs, floods, and snow; ordinary badness or heaviness of roads in winter they did by some means or other successfully contend against.

There were many acts by which proprietors of stage-coaches or their coachmen and guards might incur penalties in consequence of violating some Act of Parliament which they had either never seen or wholly disregarded, running the risk of penalties being inflicted upon themselves, and totally indifferent whether they were laying their masters open to penalties being inflicted upon them. So, in order to keep clear of the professional informer's net, Sherman had this notice printed and circulated among his coachmen and guards connected with the Estafette coach, and also in his establishment as a caution to the other men in his service in their departments:

2ND AND 3RD WILLIAM IV., CAP. 120.

Estafette, 2964.

TAKE NOTICE.

This coach, on and after 5th instant, is licensed to carry four inside, and nine outside; and if more be carried either inside or

outside, the proprietors forfeit five pounds, and the driver also five pounds, for each passenger more than the number. A child or children in the lap (that is at the breast) not counted; and two children not in the lap, but under seven years of age, are reckoned as one passenger. Neither the guard (if any), nor the driver, is reckoned a passenger.

If a child be booked as a half, the age should always be asked, and the answer stated on the way-bill.

EDWARD SHERMAN.

N.B.—There are many other regulations, for the neglect of which penalties are imposed, and as to which it is necessary that all parties concerned should consult the Act of Parliament.

Bull and Mouth, London,
October 14*th*, 1840. 200—23 April, 1836.

Besides the fast day-coaches I have mentioned as having been started by Sherman, there were others, for instance the 'Beaufort Hunt,' from London to Bath; if not exactly in opposition to the 'York House,' as not starting just at the same time, it was a rival, having Sherman as the London proprietor at one end, and William Lane, jun., Bath, at the other.

Some differences having arisen at Bath in the coaching business, young Lane got Sherman to join him, he being an enterprising man, and, as he said himself when once asked to put a day-coach on a road under not the most rosy prospects, 'always ready to try.' The London man, being usually considered the boss among his country partners in a coaching concern, had the general management and arrangement in starting a new undertaking.

That Sherman occupied this position in the 'Beaufort Hunt' case may be assumed from the circumstance that the coaches were all yellow, and one of them of his own peculiar build, somewhat heavy, and not well adapted to such fast work as the 'Beaufort Hunt.'

It happened that in its earlier days this coach was not particularly prosperous, as with the heavy loads carried, the pace adopted, and the hilly ground below Newbury, the stock got knocked to pieces; and worse than all, accidents occurred, the coach being upset twice in little more than a fortnight. The consequence was people were afraid to ride in it, and it was doing very badly; so much so, that the proprietors found it necessary to make some sweeping alterations in order to gain a position for it, restore the confidence of the public, and make it a paying concern.

As the difficulties and mishaps had occurred on the lower ground, it devolved on the lower-ground man (Lane, at Bath) to remedy them.

The first step he took was to dispense with the services of a so-called Captain Jones, who was one of the coachmen who had had an upset, and the other man who worked with him between Bath and Newbury. In their places he put on a young man who was a very good coachman, well known on the road, and who had to drive up from Bath till he met the

down-coach at the 'Halfway House,' or Newbury, and sometimes on Sunday as far as Thatcham, when he changed on to the down-coach, and drove back to Bath, making about 105 miles a day, not excepting Sundays.

By way of further expedition this coachman carried a young fellow as guard up and down with him at his own expense, and to do the skidding and unskidding on the lower hilly ground.

The stages were short, necessarily, as the pace they went was about eleven miles an hour, and they were :

From Bath to Box,	5 miles	From Marlborough,	7 miles
„ Chippenham	7 „	„ Foxfield	7 „
„ Calne	5 „	„ Halfway House,	7 „
„ Beckhampton	6 „	„ Thatcham,	7 „

The new coachman found that by some curious arrangement all the horses working in one of the coaches which was considerably heavier than the other (and must, I expect, have been one of Sherman's own), were slighter than those in the lighter coach, and generally that the stock was in very bad condition; he therefore got all the horses changed, and by care and management got them into good order.

The coach from the White Lion in the market-place at Bath became quite an object of interest, and a number of persons would stop to see it, as

they do now when a coach is leaving the White Horse Cellar. By civility and attention to his passengers, and using his interest among his own connection and friends, the coachman succeeded in re-establishing the coach in public favour, places in it being booked sometimes two or three weeks beforehand, and being always full up and down.

As the coachman drove from Bath till he met the down-coach, the only chance he had of getting his dinner was while the passengers were getting theirs at Marlborough, where the coach stopped twenty-five minutes for that purpose.

During this short time, however, the way-bill which he had received from the down-coachman was to be looked through, so he generally got the landlord to read it to him while he was eating his dinner.

Eventually, and mainly through this coachman, the coach got into a very prosperous condition, the proprietors sharing about six guineas a mile, while his own place, though rather a hard one, was lucrative, as he had two sets of passengers a day (and every day, for the coach ran on Sundays), and worth about twenty pounds a week; but out of this he paid something to his guard, whose weekly wages did not amount to much, as he received a good deal in the way of tips. The rail, which floored all the

coaches eventually, got hold of the 'Beaufort Hunt,' first of all taking it down on a truck by the Great Western to Maidenhead, and then farther on as the railway kept opening from place to place, and ultimately banishing it from the road altogether.

CHAPTER VIII.

COACH PROPRIETORS (Continued).

HAVING now shown something of Sherman's business and position in the coaching world before he was in any way interfered with by railways, I propose to show how they affected him; and in pointing out what were the results to him, it may be observed that they were only the same as were experienced I might almost say by hundreds of other men, as they had the same effect upon the business of nearly all the coach-proprietors throughout the kingdom. Some of them had laid by sufficient to enable them to live very comfortably, and, if they had an inn in a town which had been considerably enlarged and its trade increased by the establishment of a railway, may have done as well, or perhaps better than they had with coaching, for although coaches might load well, it was not all profit. Expenses were heavy, and if there was great competition the wear and tear of stock working in fast opposition coaches was very great, even granting

that a man had good luck in his stables being free from disease or death.

Considering the number of horses that were kept in some of the underground stables of the London coach-proprietors for want of better accommodation, I should say they were singularly free from disease and loss. There is this, though, to be borne in mind, that even the horses which worked in the day-coaches, and consequently on arriving in London had to sleep underground, would go out the next morning, so that they spent every other day and night in the country, together with their rest-days; while the night-coach horses were better off still, as coming into town in the morning, they were out again in the afternoon, never spending a night in town at all. Those unfortunate horses arriving in town on Saturday night, if the coach did not run on Sunday, would have to remain there till Monday morning. Sunday in London is not the most lively time under any circumstances; but I suppose if you were bound, like the horses, to spend it underground, it would be much the same as any other day in the week.

The London and Birmingham Railway was the first long line to open out of London, and Sherman's business being principally on the North road, it was a more important matter to him than to any of the London proprietors.

'I attribute,' he said, 'my losses to railroads entirely. Our business was in a very fair state till then.' In the early part of the year 1839, he said, from the opening of the railroad his business had been gradually decreasing: from the time it opened to Tring, and then to Denbigh Hall, fifteen coaches running daily had been taken off. It also affected coaches running on the Oxford road through Uxbridge and Wycombe when opened to Tring: of these he had about five or six, which were nearly all taken off then.

Though all the celebrated 'Tally Ho' coaches, of which there were three, together with the other Birmingham day-coaches, had been taken off, Sherman still stuck persistently to the road, and in conjunction with Mrs. Mountain, of the Saracen's Head, worked one night-coach to Birmingham, and kept on the 'Greyhound.' In fact, in 1839 all the coaches, day and night, were off but two, which there was great difficulty in keeping on, the fare being reduced to one pound inside, and only twelve shillings outside; and even with that reduction they got no inside passengers, as they could go by rail for a pound. The number of passengers had, in fact, so dwindled down, that they did not on an average book one inside passenger per coach, but they could have booked more than the number outside. People went away

from the office saying they could go by the railroad for a pound, so then he offered to book them as outsides, and put them inside; but that made the shares so small, that the proprietors were constantly giving notice to take off their horses.

'If some alteration does not take place,' Sherman said, referring to the heavy duties assessed on stage-coaches, 'this summer will close the whole of the coaching. I do not expect there will be a coach running at all in the winter.'

There was not a day-coach then running, but some people had asked him to try one; his answer was that there was no chance of doing any good unless some assistance was given in the reduction of duty, tolls, etc. Nothing but great reductions would enable them to compete with the railroad, and it was not fair competition as they then were. He thought to satisfy part of the public who were timid and not disposed to go by the railroad. Some portion would go by coach, but not many. The generality of coach passengers he described as timid people, who did not like to go by the railroad except at very low fares indeed—that induced the lower orders to go; but the people who travelled by coach were also so poor, that the coachmen and guards said they got nothing, and their places were not worth having.

Before all Sherman's coaches were off the Bir-

mingham road, or the line opened at all, overtures seem to have been made to him on behalf of the Railway Company, with a view of obtaining a transfer of his interest and business from the road to the railway; but considering his position stronger than it eventually turned out to be, he declined the proposition, with what results will be seen in the sequel in his negotiation with Mr. Glyn, the chairman of the London and Birmingham line at that time.

His own version of the transaction was:

'I gave Mr. Glyn an account of the number of my coaches that would be affected by the railway, and told him that when public convenience did not require these coaches on the road, I would withdraw them, and send the trade through the railway if he would allow me to do so.'

Mr. Glyn perhaps thought this was 'Thank you for nothing,' according to an old phrase. It was virtually saying, 'When the public have ceased travelling by my coaches, and my business is gone, I will pass it over to your company.'

Under these circumstances it is not surprising to find that the company made overtures to other coach-proprietors, who between them had a considerable number of coaches and mails on the Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool roads. Sherman said that

the company shut him out and made an exclusive arrangement with the other two houses; and this he considered a monopoly, and the ruin of his trade, as the company would not allow him to send his coaches, or the coaches that came up from Leeds, Scotland, and Carlisle, nearly the whole of which trade was in his hands, to their station at Euston. The proprietors wished the coaches on coming up to branch off at Northampton to the station at Denbigh Hall, and the people Sherman was working with persuaded him to apply to the Railway Company for permission to send the trade to the station at Euston Square, to work it out at Denbigh Hall to Northampton; but they would not allow him to do it, and thus his trade passed into other hands. The proprietors at Charing Cross and Lad Lane, Chaplin and Horne, alone having the privilege of working to the station and back, Sherman's trade was forced into their hands, the only reason given to him being that he did not apply soon enough, or something to that effect.

Mr. Glyn, Sherman said, asked him to make some propositions, so he made several, and offered to send certain coaches; but they made excuses for not adopting his suggestions, and at last he found they had made an exclusive arrangement with Messrs. Horne and Chaplin. The company would not allow

Sherman to go into their station with a conveyance for those passengers who had come to Denbigh Hall by the coaches.

On no other railway, he said, did such an arrangement exist. The South Western and Great Western stations were open to any person, and so he sent his coaches to the Great Western as soon as it opened.

Sherman reckoned that his loss in endeavouring to keep his coaches on had amounted to seven thousand pounds in less than two years after the opening of the railway.

Thus an extensive business which had been carried on prosperously for some twelve or fourteen years was entirely destroyed, or at all events removed from one channel to another, for people still continued to travel. One cannot but see that the loss, so far as Sherman was concerned, arose in a great measure from his endeavouring to carry things with rather a high hand, and defy the Railway Company. He seems to have discovered his mistake, as he afterwards adopted a directly opposite course with the Great Western, which resulted in his getting the working of the omnibuses from that station to the bank.

The palmy days of the old Bull and Mouth may be said to have then terminated.

I will now take the next person of importance

among the London coach and mail proprietors, Benjamin Worthy Horne. He did a considerable business at his three coaching inns, having coaches on nearly all the roads, travelling, as he said, all distances from twenty-five to more than two hundred miles; the twenty-five miles being the Dorking coach, the only one he had that carried six inside, and the two hundred miles would be the Liverpool 'Umpire.' He horsed five mails—the Gloucester, Chester, Dover, Stroud, and Hastings—some of them wholly out of London, and some in conjunction with other London men.

He had also the foreign mail, known as the 'Dover Auxiliary Mail,' leaving London on Tuesday and Friday nights only, and carrying the foreign mails. It was an ordinary stage-coach, unlike the regular mails, and was provided by Horne himself. If it happened to be in Dover when the foreign mail packet arrived, it brought up the bags; but if not, they were forwarded by mail-cart.

Horne said he believed his father, William Horne, had the credit of setting the first example of speed in the mails and coaches with a coach up and down from Brighton, and he was the man who said that in his opinion the mails went too fast. They travelled so fast that they continually met with accidents on dark nights, his coach having unfortunately killed a

J.Sturgess del et lith.

Hanhart imp

GUIDED OUT OF LONDON BY TORCHES

gentleman one night not long before; and the Manchester mail, some time previously, having almost destroyed three or four people. He was a large proprietor; his coaches went almost everywhere, and he had 200 horses standing at Barnet in the year 1827. He had the Chester mail, and went to Charing Cross in 1812; but in 1835 B. W. Horne succeeded him.

Horne had some fast coaches engaged in his trade, as the Bedford 'Times,' a noted coach; the 'Independent Tally-Ho,' one of the three running in that name from London to Birmingham; and the 'Nimrod,' in opposition to the Shrewsbury 'Wonder,' which must necessarily have been fast to keep either in front of, or anywhere near its rival.

Horne had the foresight, like Chaplin, to realize at an early period the fact that railways would entirely supersede coach travelling; and accordingly, with Chaplin, he threw his connection and interest into the London and Birmingham Railway, and hence arose the firm of Chaplin and Horne.

It was alleged that the coaches between London and Birmingham were bought off by the Railway Company; but this Mr. Glyn most distinctly denied, and said that he wondered how such a report could have originated.

In all probability, joining the London and Birmingham line at once secured for Chaplin and Horne

the carrying agency to it, or that agency formed part of the inducement held out to them to withdraw their coaches from the road, and not, as was said, £10,000 for throwing their interest into the railway.

The next person in my list may, I think, be Robert Gray. He went to the Bolt-in-Tun Coach Office, in Fleet Street, in the year 1807, having previously carried on the business of a coach-proprietor at the Belle Sauvage, on Ludgate Hill. He said he was extensively engaged in business as a stage-coach proprietor, chiefly on the western and southern roads, having nothing at all upon the northern.

He was concerned in two mails, the Portsmouth, and the Hastings, a pair-horse coach which he worked in conjunction with Horne, whose business was about four times as large as his own, as he knew from the respective sums they paid annually for duties.

That the Bolt-in-Tun is a very old coaching-inn, or rather an inn from which conveyances of some description started upwards of a hundred years since, is clear from an account given of it in the book on 'Signboards' before referred to, which runs thus:

Hereford Machine,

In a day and a half twice, continues flying from the Swan and Falcon, Hereford, Monday and Thursday mornings, and from the Bolt-in-Tun, Fleet Street, London, Monday and Thursday evenings. Fare, 19s.; outside, one half.—*Hereford Journal, January* 12, 1775.

The announcement alluding to the machine flying from the Swan and Falcon, appears to have been composed by some facetious individual; so far as can be ascertained from contemporary records of the pace of the machines at that period, and the state of the roads, there could have been but little flying about their progress—one would be rather inclined to designate it crawling; three miles an hour, or something more, I fancy, was about the rate of travelling. But by this time the roads were, perhaps, beginning to improve, as in 1784, only nine years later, the first mail-coach was put upon the road.

Some persons who probably were well acquainted with Mr. Gray, and wished to have a joke with him, sent him the following letter, evidently a hoax; but there was a Hereford night-coach called the 'Champion,' which ran from London to Hereford from the Bolt-in-Tun. There was no date to the letter, but the post-mark was Long Lane, Smithfield, 23rd December, 1834, and twopence paid:

Sir,

I think it right to inform you of a plan that four determined and careless fellows are about to adopt, as by so doing it will prevent you very serious disappointment to-morrow, and we are perfectly safe, as by this time it will be impossible for you to prevent its being carried into execution. We are perfectly aware that you and half London expect the 'Champion' to arrive to-morrow filled in and out with Christmas baskets. So do we! and therefore intend to ease it of its load, which, from

the horses being no longer strained by the weight, will certainly benefit you, and certainly us by the possession.

Our plan is as follows :

We intend to meet the coach at the top of Dashwood Hill, with a close tilted van and four horses ; one of us will seize the guard with a pistol at him, and a second will bring the coachman down if he dares move. As their assistance will be of great service to us in unloading, they will not receive the least injury, provided they are quiet. You will have the kindness to tell the Welsh rabbits on their calling that they may depend on every attention being paid to their provisions.

With every respect and esteem,

Believe us,

Yours most affectionately.

Tuesday night.

We trust you will not be offended or hurt by the postage being paid, which we do from the kindest motives.

Various were the modes which coach-proprietors adopted for bringing their coaches under the notice of the public, the employment of sandwich-men being one method resorted to ; thus you would frequently see a man with a large board back and front of him, parading up and down Fleet Street, Cheapside, or some other principal thoroughfare in the City, with the announcement of a coach which had just been started ; one that had changed proprietors, being removed, perhaps, from the Belle Sauvage, on Ludgate Hill, to the Bull and Mouth, St. Martin's le Grand; or else one the fares of which had been considerably reduced. The City was not so crowded in those days, and the sandwich-men could loiter along without

causing any obstruction or subjecting themselves to the policeman's imperative mandate, 'Move on.' Large bills, similar to those carried by the sandwich-men, were of course posted in the usual way on walls, hoardings, and other available spaces; and in the event of its being an opposition coach, similar bills and modes of publicity would very likely be adopted by the coach already on the road, each party inserting in his announcement what he considered the strongest inducement to travellers to patronize his coach, so that one might commence with the heading:

The Tally Ho,

NEW AND FAST COACH TO BIRMINGHAM

In eleven hours.

Every morning (Sundays excepted) at eight,

From the Swan with Two Necks.

The other might begin thus:

GREAT REDUCTION OF FARES!

and then set forth all other particulars as to the time and place of starting and destination.

In a country newspaper, published in the year 1764, I chanced to find the following advertisement relative to a London and Ipswich coach. There are two singular announcements in it, the one showing the very small amount of luggage each passenger was

allowed to carry, only eighteen pounds weight; the other, that the coaches were hung on steel springs, and did not carry any outside passengers whatever.

Ipswich, August 17th, 1764.

The London and Ipswich Post-Coaches

Set out on Monday, the 27th inst., at seven o'clock in the morning from the Black Bull Inn, in Bishopsgate, London, and at the same time from the Great White Horse Inn, in Ipswich, and continue every day (Sunday excepted) to be at the above places the same evening at five o'clock; each passenger to pay threepence per mile, and to be allowed eighteen pounds luggage, all above to pay one penny per pound, and so in proportion. The coaches, hung upon steel springs, are very easy, large and commodious, carry six inside but no outside passengers whatsoever; but have great conveniences for parcels or game (to keep them from the weather), which will be delivered at London and Ipswich the same night.

As these coaches are set out for the ease and expedition of gentlemen and ladies travelling, the proprietors humbly hope for their encouragement, and are determined to spare no pains to render it as agreeable as they can.

Performed (if God permits) by:

Pet. Sheldon, at the Bull, Bishopsgate Street, London;
Thomas Archer, at the White Hart, Brentwood;
Charles Kerry, at the Black Boy, Chelmsford;
Geo. Reynolds, at the Three Cups, Colchester; and
Chas. Harris, at the Great White Horse, Ipswich.

N.B. The proprietors will not be answerable for any money, plate, jewels, or writings, unless entered and paid for as such.

Ipswich is sixty-nine miles from London, so that the rate of travelling to accomplish the journey in

ten hours must have been more than eight miles an hour, allowing for the time occupied in changing horses, and dinner somewhere on the road. From what we read as to the condition of the roads in those days, and the ordinary rate of travelling, these coaches must have been a sort of 'Wonder' of the period, but the name does not appear in the advertisement. It is the only instance I have ever met with of a coach not carrying any outside passenger.

In addition to these modes of publicity, some proprietors adopted the plan of having papers slightly tinted, and somewhat of the consistency and size of bank-notes, containing information as to their coaches, circulated among the persons who went to the coach-office to book places or make any inquiry.

Gray had one of these papers referring to his coach the 'Champion,' and it was in this form :

One

Champion of England. No. 4534.

CHAMPION OF ENGLAND.

Post Coach. No. 4534.

I promise to convey any Lady or Gentleman, on Paying the Sum of One Pound, from London

1822 1822.

For the Govr. and Compa. of the Champion of England.

£ *One*

Another coach and mail proprietor was William Gilbert, who kept the Blossoms Inn, Laurence Lane,

Cheapside, respecting which there is this notice in the 'History of Signboards': 'St. Laurent was the sign of an inn, in Laurence Lane, Cheapside, but from a border of blossoms or flowers round it, commonly called Blossoms Inn.'

Only one mail ran from his inn, and that was the 'Brighton,' a pair-horse concern. It was not by any means a fast one, being allowed within a trifle of seven hours to perform the journey, leaving Brighton about eleven o'clock at night. This gave ample time for it to arrive in London among the other mails with the letters and papers.

Not many coaches ran from the Blossoms Inn; but there was rather a noted and fast coach, called 'The Peveril of the Peak,' from London to Manchester, leaving London in the evening.

Joseph Hearn, proprietor of the King's Arms at the bottom of Snow Hill, was in the same position as Gilbert as regarded mail-coach work, as he had only one, the Birmingham, a slow mail through Banbury. He also had a very good Birmingham coach, the 'Crown Prince,' through Banbury and Warwick. These were about the only long coaches he had, his business being principally to places in Buckinghamshire, and a good deal of van and spring waggon work. His coaches and waggons went to Aylesbury, Buckingham, and other places to which it

seemed that nobody else had any conveyance. The short distances rendered extraordinary speed unnecessary, and hence several of his coaches were of the slow six inside order.

His coach-office was a good deal resorted to, as it afforded the only means of reaching the places I have mentioned, as well as many others situated in the same district; but except for having one of the mails, I should not have included him in the list of the principal coach-proprietors of London.

Robert Fagg, of the Bell and Crown, Holborn, had two mails only from his inn; the 'Louth,' which he horsed jointly with Mountain, and the 'Lynn,' jointly with Chaplin. The gateway where his coaches used to drive in, like that at the Bull and Mouth, has been thrown into the house, and the yard built over, so that the old yard and stables are done away with.

The premises being very limited, when three or four night-coaches which had arrived in the morning had been washed and made ready to go out again in the afternoon, they remained in the yard, while Her Majesty's two mails remained in Holborn all day, in front of the inn. An old man with one horse and the pole-hook of one mail attached to the back of the coach he was driving, brought up two clean mails in the morning from Vidler's at Millbank,

and returned with the two which had arrived, and were taken back to be washed, oiled, and overhauled, ready to go out the next night.

It seems rather strange at the present time to hear of two mail-coaches standing out in Holborn all day, but such was the fact, and two or three stage-coaches used to stand out in the same way lower down at the Bull Inn, and old Bell, in Holborn.

Not having room for all his horses in the Bell and Crown yard, Fagg had some stabling in Leather Lane; but he had no underground accommodation as there was at the Swan with Two Necks, and Bull and Mouth.

I now come to a very noted and spirited female coach and mail proprietor, and hope I shall not be considered deficient in gallantry from having mentioned so many before her. There were but two in London, one of whom was Sarah Ann Mountain, of the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, now, like Hearn's establishment at the bottom of Snow Hill, entirely done away with. One at the top, the other at the bottom of the hill; by the construction of the Holborn viaduct, both were, I suppose I may say, improved off the face of the earth.

Mrs. Mountain was a widow, and her business was managed by her son Peter. The only mail she had was the 'Louth,' which she horsed jointly with Fagg.

Part of a considerable yard at the back of Mrs. Mountain's premises was converted into a coach-maker's shop, and she built some of her coaches, letting them out to the partners with whom she worked, and charging a mileage for them. She reckoned that she could build a good comfortable stage-coach for a hundred and ten or twenty guineas, and let this to the company at threepence half-penny a mile. Her establishment in horses consisted of about two hundred, and her principal coaches were the 'Rockingham' to Leeds, and one of the 'Tally Ho's' to Birmingham, known by way of distinction as 'Mountain's Tally Ho.'

It was an old-established business, having been carried on, before Mrs. Mountain took to it in 1818, by her husband, and earlier still by his father. Like Sherman, Mrs. Mountain kept some of her coaches on the road as long as she could, and ran the 'Prince of Wales,' a night-coach, to Bristol, in conjunction with other persons, after all the other coaches had been taken off; but ultimately that had to succumb.

I now come to the last of the London coach-proprietors who had a mail, Robert Nelson, of the Bell Savage, or Belle Sauvage, as it was spelt both ways on the business advertisements, bills and papers, and painted on the coaches. He had only one mail, the London and Norwich, through Newmarket and

Bury. He horsed it thirty-three miles from London to Hockerill; but it was not a very prosperous concern, as the Post Office was obliged to pay the high price of eightpence a mile in order to induce anyone to work it.

His establishment consisted of about four hundred horses, and he had a considerable number of coaches, with some of the fast and fashionable day-coaches amongst them, as the 'York House' to Bath, and 'Berkeley Hunt' to Cheltenham; the 'Red Rover' to Brighton, and at one time a coach of that name to Manchester; on its removal for some cause from his inn, he started the 'Beehive' to the same place.

I have referred to the antiquity of some of the London coaching inns, and must not omit what I find in the 'History of Signboards' about the Belle Sauvage: 'Once the property of Lady Arabella Savage, familiarly called "Bell Savage," which name was represented in a rebus by a wild man and a bell, and so it was always drawn on the panels of the coaches that used to run to and from it. . . . In the sixteenth century the Bell Savage appears to have been a place of amusement . . . . it existed in the reign of Henry VI.'

The 'Spectator' states that it was named after the French play, 'La Belle Sauvage.'

Among the coaches from the Belle Sauvage was the

'Star' to Cambridge, driven up in the morning and back again in the afternoon by one Joseph Walton, popularly known as 'Joe Walton,'—in fact, I never heard him called anything else. He had the reputation of being a first-rate coachman, but I never travelled with him, or had any opportunity of forming an opinion as to his abilities on the bench. He was a tall, powerful man, and, so far as appearance went, looked as if he could pull all the horses' heads off.

In addition to the reputation of being a very good coachman he had that of being of a very bad temper, in which I am inclined to concur; and although I do not profess to be a talented physiognomist, I should say that his countenance and expression warranted the presumption.

It always annoyed him to have any females on his coach, and the more so if they had luggage or parcels which rendered it necessary for them to address him respecting them, as there was not any guard attached to the coach. I fear they did not always meet with a very polite reception.

I have heard that on one occasion a gentleman, whose hat had blown off, asked 'Joe' to pull up, but he made no attempt to do so; upon which the gentleman pushed Joe's hat off, which of course had the desired effect—a mode of proceeding which I should have thought rather dangerous, though it did not, I

believe, lead to any disturbance, perhaps because the gentleman picked up 'Joe's' hat and returned it to him. Walton didn't certainly look like a man to play a practical joke on.

Robert Nelson himself was at times rather peculiar and brusque to persons he came in contact with, but he was not so rough as Joe Walton.

For instance, a gentleman one day making a complaint with respect to a coachman or guard, Nelson closed the discussion by remarking that if his coachman or guard was not fit for his place, he wouldn't be there. On another occasion a gentleman called to see him, when Nelson sent word by his waiter that he was engaged; so the gentleman said he would stay till he was at liberty. Not wishing to see him, Nelson went out; and the gentleman, after waiting about an hour, inquired of the waiter again whether he was disengaged, when he was told Mr. Nelson had gone out, so of course he left. On Nelson's return, he said to the waiter, 'Well, Charles, how did you get rid of your visitor?' Charles explained the circumstances under which he had left, not in the best of tempers.

Although the name of the Belle Sauvage yard is still preserved, all the buildings in the old yard have been pulled down, and fine lofty warehouses erected upon their site.

In consequence of the narrowness of Ludgate Hill, when a coach was coming out of the yard the horse-keeper always went out first to signal to any approaching vehicles, so that they might be stopped, or the coachman might wait till they had gone by.

After nearly, if not all, the coaches had been taken off the western road, a coach called the 'Rival' was started by Nelson and some other coach-proprietors, to run to Cheltenham; but it was eventually obliged to be taken off, after a not very long or prosperous career, I fancy.

Although Nelson had a good many coaches on the western road through Hounslow, and a sufficient number of horses standing there to have an enclosed square yard with stabling on every side of it, he had not any West-end booking-office to himself, as Chaplin, Sherman, and Horne had; but his coaches stopped and took up their passengers at the general booking-offices, such as the old and new White Horse Cellar, the White Bear, or Gloucester Coffee House, in Piccadilly, at each of which places they booked passengers and parcels for several different proprietors.

I have now noticed all the London coach-proprietors who were also mail-coach proprietors; but there remains one who was a very celebrated person as a coach-proprietor only, and who carried on a very extensive coaching business with great spirit and success

in what I may call a remote part of London. It scarcely seems either polite, especially to a female, or in order, being one of the largest among the London proprietors, to have deferred all mention of her until the last; but all those I have given some account of have been concerned in horsing the mails as well as coaches, so having exhausted the list of those who combined the two departments, I will now proceed with the coach-proprietor solely.

Ann Nelson, like Mrs. Mountain, was a widow, her husband, John Nelson, having carried on business at the Bull Inn, Aldgate, up to the time of his death, when she continued it, with the assistance of her son John, her son George being the coachman on her Exeter night-coach, the 'Defiance,' and her other son, Robert, having the Belle Sauvage. Down in Aldgate, at quite the East-end of London, most of her coaches naturally went on the eastern roads, as Norwich, Ipswich, Southend, and most of the places of any importance in Essex and Suffolk. Not that her business was confined to that district, as she had the Exeter 'Telegraph' day-coach, which started from her house at half-past four in the morning, so that with the getting up, dressing, and having your breakfast, it was a good deal like rising in the middle of the night, or as soon as you were in bed. If, as would probably, I should imagine, be the case, you failed to

get any breakfast at all before starting, you had to wait until you reached Bagshot at eight o'clock, when you were allowed the not superabundant period of twenty minutes for the meal.

I never did get up at what is sometimes called 'the unearthly hour' of three in the morning, and should personally much prefer travelling all night. I suppose the time spent in getting from the extreme end of London to the west, and picking up passengers on the way, rendered such an early start necessary. The coach called at the Bull and Mouth, and if at the same places as the night-coach, the Fountain in Foster Lane, Cheapside, and at one of the offices in Piccadilly, and was not timed away from there till half-past five, just an hour after leaving Aldgate; but the 'Telegraph' Manchester day-coach, although going twenty-one miles farther in the day, did not leave the Bull and Mouth till five, and the Peacock, Islington, at a quarter past five in the morning. Quite early enough to turn out on a winter's morning certainly, and possibly go without breakfast till Northampton was reached, at twenty minutes to nine, when, as on the Exeter coach, twenty minutes only were allowed you to eat as much as you could, with tea or coffee too hot to drink during that short time.

The mails were more liberal in their allowance of

time for breakfast, as the Devonport gave twenty-five minutes, and the Holyhead thirty-five; while the London and Edinburgh and Glasgow mails, whether in consequence of postal arrangements or not I don't know, made a stoppage of forty minutes about breakfast-time at Grantham.

For all Mrs. Nelson's customers, travelling to and from the Eastern Counties, considerable accommodation at a good inn was in brisk demand; and thus we find that, independently of her coaching-department, she had the business of the Bull Inn. I adhere to the good old name of 'inn,' as it is that used by herself on the time-bills and other documents, and her house was universally known as the 'Bull Inn, Aldgate,' to distinguish it from the numerous Bulls in other places, it being so common as a sign. Nobody ever heard of the 'Bull Hotel, in Aldgate;' and if you had used such an expression, I expect you would have been pulled up directly with 'Oh, I suppose you mean the Bull Inn, Aldgate!'

Up between five and six, and sometimes earlier, in the morning, dressed in a cap of a peculiar fashion, which I cannot pretend to describe, Mrs. Nelson was quite a character, active, and bustling about. She made up considerably over a hundred beds in her house—in fact, I have been told that it was nearer two; and she lodged and boarded about three dozen of her coach-

men and guards, whose comfort and convenience she studied with great care, their tariff being considerably lower than that of her customers.

She used to give all her coachmen and guards an annual dinner, which lasted for three days, so as to include them all as they arrived in town, which could not have been accomplished had the entertainment been restricted to one day only.

A separate room was set apart for their exclusive use, with a number seven on it, like a commercial room. No other persons but the guards and coachmen, or some one invited by them, were allowed to enter it.

Their dinners consisted of soup, fowls, etc., for the small charge of 1s. 6d.; and they had a whip among themselves of 2s. 6d. for wine. They paid nothing for their beds, but used to give the chambermaids two guineas for a Christmas-box, and paid 1s. a week to the boots, and two guineas as a Christmas-box to the waiter, who was said to have given £200 for his situation.

Twelve was about the usual number sitting down to dinner, occasionally supplemented by the presence of some 'swell,' admitted only on the invitation of one of the privileged body. The noted Marquis of Waterford and his friend Captain Duff, together with the Hon. Robert Kenyon, usually known in his own county as 'His Honour,' were occasional visitors,

together with many other gentlemen who took an interest in coaching.

Mr. Kenyon was very fond of anything connected with coaching, having his own four-in-hand, but constantly driving some of the regular coaches. On one occasion a coachman he knew very well being laid up by illness, Mr. Kenyon volunteered to drive his coach for him till he recovered, which was in the course of three or four weeks, during which time Mr. Kenyon regularly took his fees from the passengers, but handed them all over to the coachman, so that he was not any loser by his temporary absence from the box.

Some of Mrs. Nelson's guards wore red coats; in such cases it was the etiquette to appear at dinner in them. And it was a rule not to address each other by their proper names, but by the name of the road on which a man worked; thus one man would be addressed as 'Exeter,' another as 'Norwich,' and so on.

Many of the guards were first-rate performers on the key-bugle, and it was by no means an unusual thing for Mrs. Nelson to ask one of them—perhaps the one going out with the next coach—to play in the yard for a time for the amusement of herself and customers.

A most active and energetic woman, she seems

to have carried on her business very successfully, and much to the approbation of those who came in contact with her, whether as customers or in her service.

Her establishment was quite a model of the good old inn, which now, I believe, is quite extinct, as the various requirements for it have ceased to exist, as well as the means by which it was supported.* One of the old inns on a main road now, does not perhaps bear the most lively aspect; but then, be it remembered, it is as different as can be from the time when it was in a constant state of activity throughout the day, with late arrivals and early departures, and with coaches coming and going in the course of the night, with loads of hungry passengers stopping to supper.

With Mrs. Nelson I think the list of noted coach-proprietors in London may be closed, although there were many others carrying on business in a minor way, having perhaps two or three coaches to Brighton, or other places, distant only some fifty or sixty miles from London. Nearly all those I have noticed had many coaches running from their offices. Although travelling at a good pace, they were not all performing anything extraordinary, like those going the long distances in the day.

* Since this was written the house has been entirely pulled down.

Volumes, I suppose, might be filled if even a short history of all the noted coach-proprietors were written, and among them would be found the names of Costar and Waddell, at Oxford; Several, at Birmingham; Lacey and Allen, at Manchester; Brotherton, at Liverpool; Teather, at Newcastle; and Piper, of Edinburgh, whom I may describe as the Chaplin of Scotland, as he horsed every mail out of Edinburgh, six in number, besides having a large general coaching business.

There were two proprietors of whom I have a word to say. One, a woman, carrying on business in the country, but whose coaches were connected with those running out of London; the other, a man, who had coaches out of London, with respect to the management of which he pursued a method entirely original.

As a mark of respect to the sex I will take Maria Fromont first, thus contravening the old rule we used to learn in the grammar, which said: 'The masculine is more worthy than the feminine, and the feminine more worthy than the neuter.'

Miss Fromont was a single woman, who kept the King's Head, at Thatcham, and farmed a considerable quantity of land there.

She was also one of the middle-ground proprietors of a day-coach running between London and Bristol,

up and down every day, including Sundays, through Calne and Chippenham, and also of a night-coach running in a similar way; they were called the 'New Company's' coaches. Her house being just fifty-three miles from London, was nearly equi-distant from each end of the journey, and hence was a convenient place for the down and up day-coaches to stop at for dinner, and the down and up night-coaches for supper; a by no means inconsiderable advantage to a middle-ground proprietor, who frequently had nothing but the actual sharing to look to. Four coaches, if loading well, stopping at an inn for dinner and supper daily or nightly, brought no small amount of grist to the mill under ordinary circumstances; but the passengers by Maria Fromont's coaches were not of a class to spend much on the road, and many would carry provisions with them, so as to avoid altogether the expense of a meal at an inn during the journey.

More particulars as to the coaches she was connected with will be found in the coaching arrangements appearing in the Rummer hotel bill; but the fares being considerably less than any of the other coaches, she naturally got all the lower-class passengers, a great number of whom, nothwithstanding even the reduced charge announced in the bill for a dinner or supper, would not, I dare say, take a meal.

The fares by the night-coach being very low, did

not admit of the passengers being allowed to carry a great amount of luggage—in fact, I should expect the majority of them had but little to carry; but on the other hand, there were persons who, in order to avail themselves of the benefit of the reduced fare, would travel by the coach, trusting to no notice being taken of any excess in the weight of luggage, and feeling quite at ease on seeing it put on the coach without first undergoing the test of the weighing machine. Had they but known what the practice was on the arrival of the coaches at the King's Head, their equanimity might have been somewhat disturbed.

On arrival the coaches were taken into the yard, the passengers' luggage was unloaded and weighed, and an extra charge was made according to the distance it had been carried, and the excess of the weight allowed; and thus in some instances it might turn out that, although ostensibly cheaper, in fact it was a dearer coach than the others, with the further drawback of being much slower.

This unexpected levying of what was looked upon as black-mail, used to produce something stronger than what Mr. Akers, one of the mail inspectors, denominated 'severe observations,' when a portion of a gentleman's luggage was taken off the mail in the General Post Office yard.

When disputes arose as to the additional payment, and passengers, giving vent to their feelings, vowed they would never travel by that coach again, Miss Fromont comforted herself with the observation, that 'she didn't care if she could only see them once,' the extra charge making the fare exceed the other coaches; and as the fares were nominally so very low, a tolerable number of persons were always going by the coaches, wholly unaware of what would happen when they had got half-way on their journey. As the coach had not any established connection of passengers frequently going up and down the road, the threat of not repeating a journey was regarded as perfectly harmless, and not likely, if carried into effect, to hurt her at all.

She horsed the coaches from Twyford to Hungerford, a distance of thirty-four miles, for which purpose, had they been fast coaches, she must have kept between seventy and eighty horses; but at the quiet pace at which they travelled, fewer horses would suffice, and last longer. A coachman described them as being 'as fat as pigs;' and Waude, the coach-builder, in the Old Kent Road, said the wheels on her coaches lasted a week or ten days longer than on his other coaches, that went faster. Unfortunately, somehow glanders got into the stable, when a large number of her horses were turned out; in order to

prevent the disease from extending to the other proprietor's horses working in the coaches, when they arrived at Twyford fresh poles and bars were put to the coaches, and her horses worked with them down to Hungerford, when they were taken off, and others put on to continue the journey. The same course was adopted with the up-coaches when they arrived at Hungerford.

After the coaches were driven off the road by the Great Western Railway, she continued to reside at Thatcham; but the King's Head, like many of the other inns on the old coach-roads, has been converted into private dwellings.

The other coach-proprietor to whom I have referred was Thomas Cooper, who resided in the same village with Miss Fromont, though their houses were some little distance apart, hers being just at the entrance to Thatcham from London, and his 'Cottage' at the end nearest Bath, but just clear of the village.

At one time he kept the Castle Hotel and posting-house at Marlborough, a large house, formerly a seat of the Earl of Hereford, and afterwards of the Duke of Somerset, built on the site of the old castle, and hence called the Castle Hotel, a noted house in the days of road-travelling, but now merged in the extensive building of Marlborough College.

A story is told of the King of the Belgians stopping

at the Castle when Cooper kept it ; and as the King travelled in regal style, Cooper probably considered that the bill should be made out on a scale corresponding with the dignity of the traveller, for the King, on seeing it, observed to some one with him : 'Ah ! this is something like a bill, made out in a proper way for a king.'

From this I presume that the other innkeepers along the road were either unaware of the rank of their royal guest, or fearful of incurring his displeasure and losing his patronage if their charges were too high.

Cooper, who was a shrewd man, seems to have hit on what is sometimes called 'the most improved plan.'

He always aimed at expedition on the road, and his stock direction to the persons he was posting on, if they were in a hurry, was to tell the post-boys how long they were to be doing the journey, and if they did not do it in that time not to pay them ; thus his stock got a deal of wear and tear. He gave up the Castle and moved up to Thatcham, where he bought the Cottage, pulled down some of the old buildings, and erected stabling for a considerable number of horses, the up and down day and night coaches changing and stopping there for meals. There was a painting of the Cottage on the doors of

all his coaches, with 'Cooper's Cottage, Thatcham,' underneath.

On his removal to Thatcham he gave up the posting business, and, I believe in the year 1827, started his coaches under the name of 'Cooper's Company;' but although called a company, I have understood it was all his own from end to end, which was rather an arduous undertaking for a man in those days, considering that a great part of his business must be far away from his home, and that locomotion then was not so easy or expeditious as now; neither could you send a message or directions to any servant at a distance by a telegram: and hence, having 125 miles in length to look after, even with the assistance of foremen and others, who much increased the expenses of management, it was rather a hazardous undertaking. He was the only man I have ever heard of undertaking such a task. None of the London proprietors would, if they could help it, horse a coach or mail more than thirty miles out of London; so that, although they had concerns on a number of different roads, they were all, so to speak, within a ring-fence, close at home, and any part of them could be reached from London in three or four hours. But it was vastly otherwise with a man who, being in London, might receive an urgent letter requiring his immediate presence in Bristol. As all the day-coaches for that

place would have left London before the letters were delivered in the morning, it would be necessary to wait for a night coach or mail going down, which would not arrive at Bristol till all the up day-coaches had left, thus obliging you to wait there for an up night-coach before you could get up the road again.

I fancy that this inability to frequently inspect his stock and business all up and down the road subjected Cooper to a great deal of loss, notwithstanding that he was a very active man and seemed always to be about.

He had not any coaching inn of his own in London, but his coaches started from the White Bear, in Basinghall Street, long since entirely abolished. I am not aware that any other coaches ran from the same place. They subsequently started from the George Inn, Aldermanbury.

In like manner, at the Bristol end, Cooper did not run to one of the coaching inns, but his booking-office was at No. 6 in the High Street, exactly opposite the Rummer Hotel, from which the 'New Company' ran. I suppose it was when the New Company was started that Cooper, to distinguish his, called it the 'Old Company,' the name by which it was always known, or else 'Cooper's Coach'—there was not any proprietor's name on it but his.

The system of passengers giving no fees to the

coachmen and guards, who were entirely paid by Cooper, notwithstanding remarks I have heard condemning it, was, I believe, favourably regarded by the public, and was certainly adopted by other London proprietors, as Chaplin and Nelson both ran coaches on it; and of course Cooper's opponents, the New Company, were obliged to fall in with it when they started.

So far from coming down on his passengers with charges for extra luggage, Cooper pursued the opposite plan, very injudiciously, and much to his own loss and injury. In those days, for a great deal of heavy luggage, where expedition was indispensable, and the goods were wanted immediately, the heavy, strong, and large night-coaches were the only available means of transit. There might not be on the road even what was called a fly-waggon, a vehicle somewhat lighter and quicker than the broad-wheeled waggon, which never went out of a walking pace.

Cooper did not restrict his passengers in the quantity of luggage they might take, or make any charge for it. This, of course, soon became known; and the plan that commercial men and many persons going up to London to purchase quantities of goods adopted, would be to travel up by the mail, make their purchases, and then return by Cooper's night-coaches with their heavy packages.

Thus the coaches were heavily laden every night with passengers and their goods, in addition to which they used to carry samples of wool from London to Melksham, where they were taken off for Bradford; but these, of which there might be forty or fifty hung on to the net, were paid for at about eighteenpence each, not being passengers' luggage.

So heavy were the loads those night-coaches used to carry, that they were built with an extra leaf in the springs, in order to prevent the coach from settling down on the axle. Some idea may be formed of the weights the horses had to draw in these night-coaches, as, on putting one on the weighing-table at Beckhampton gate one night, it was found to be four tons and a half, no trifle for each horse, especially as they were timed at a pretty good pace, being only allowed six hours to do the fifty-three miles between London and Thatcham, and the same pace on the lower ground, some parts of which were very hilly, taking Marlborough Hill for instance, up which many of the coaches always had six horses.

Although Cooper's coaches were popular and loaded well, the wear and tear of his stock was very great, from the loads they used to carry, added, perhaps, to the want of personal supervision over such a long distance; so there was generally at Thatcham a

large number of temporarily disabled horses, whose places were filled up by a man named Alexander of the Barbican. The cottage, stables, and paddock were a sort of hospital for his sick and otherwise inefficient stock, and it was by no means an unusual thing for Mrs. Cooper to turn up her sleeves and make bran-mashes upon an emergency for some of the horses.

Among his coachmen was one with a wooden leg, who married Cooper's sister or daughter, and from this circumstance, I suppose, had sufficient interest to get put on the coach and drive from London to Thatcham, down one day and up the next.

Curiously enough, when this man was about to get married, he bought a cork leg for the occasion. Whether under the impression that it might be the right thing in the right place in the event of the 'Cork Leg' being sung at the wedding breakfast, or with the idea that he would be somewhat raised in the bride's estimation if he led her to the hymeneal altar with a cork leg instead of his ordinary wooden appendage, I don't know; at all events, she declined the intended compliment, and expressed her determination not to marry him at all unless he was married with the wooden leg, to which he accordingly consented.

What became of the cork leg I don't know, nor do I suppose at this distance of time there is any means

of ascertaining. As a coachman on the Bristol road said to me a few years since: 'I should think he must be dead, wooden leg and all.'

Cooper's coachmen were mostly large powerful men, but he ultimately found out that smaller yet quicker and more active young men were better, as he observed to one of this class that it would have saved him some thousands of pounds if he had employed men of that calibre earlier. Before he had formed this opinion a thin young man one day applied to Cooper to be put on one of his coaches. He was, however, so much smaller than his usual standard that Cooper looked at him with some little surprise and smiled, giving the applicant to understand that he was not big enough for the place; he did, however, eventually get put on, and for some time drove the night-coach on the lower ground from Thatcham to Bristol, was afterwards moved on to the upper ground, and continued to drive up and down from London as long as the coaches remained on the road.

As Cooper was particular about time being kept, no coaches being allowed to pass his, in answer to any complaints by the coachmen as to the horses, his answer was sometimes: 'You find whipcord and I'll find horses.'

After carrying on the coaches for some years, and

losing a large sum of money by posting and coaching—no less, it was said, than £20,000—Cooper found a difficulty in providing money for purchasing horses so frequently, and paying all his other expenses; so that, in order to secure themselves, men at each end took all the money as it was earned by the coaches, Cooper's horses were very badly kept, and he became bankrupt at the end of the year 1832, when the coaches were taken over by Chaplin, moved from the George Inn, Aldermanbury, to the Swan with two Necks, Lad Lane, and horsed by him down to Thatcham, and from thence to Bristol by Niblett, of the White Lion there, and Lane, of Bath. The coaches then were very well done, and still stopped at the Cottage for meals as before, Cooper continuing to reside there, and acting, I take it, as manager to the proprietors by some arrangement.

When the coaches were driven off the road Chaplin got Cooper the appointment of stationmaster at Richmond, where he died, after having filled the office a good many years, and, I rather think, retired on a pension.

The frequent payments travellers were called upon to make at hotels for waiters, chambermaids, boots and porters, led to the adoption of the system of making a fixed inclusive charge for servants in hotel bills, which I believe is almost universally approved

by travellers, and this probably suggested to Cooper the idea of his guards and coachmen being entirely paid by himself.

As a proof that travellers on the Bath road were not all so satisfied with a long bill as the King of the Belgians was with his account at Marlborough, we may quote Jekyl's well-known epigram:

'The Pelican at Speenhamland,
That stands below the hill,
May well be called the Pelican
From his enormous bill.'

CHAPTER IX.

NO HORSES, NO COACHMAN.

COACH-PROPRIETORS, like partners in other businesses, would sometimes have differences among themselves, when one of them would threaten to take his horses off, which might be the means of carrying his point; failing which he might even put his threat into execution, leaving the other partners to carry on the coach as best they could.

I know only of one instance in which this actually occurred; it was on the old Shrewsbury 'Union,' which ran through Birmingham, Oxford, and Woodstock, and on the arrival of the coach in the night on its up-journey, at the inn where it changed in Woodstock there were not any horses to go on. Ultimately, however, four were procured, but not having regular four-horse harness they could not be driven. There was, moreover, only one postboy on the spot, and he, being drunk, was not available. In this state of things there appeared to be but one course to adopt, which was accordingly put into

operation: the coachman drove the wheelers and the guard was extemporized as a jolly postboy, riding one of the leaders in the orthodox postboy style, barring his dress, and in this way the twelve-mile stage was got through.

Another instance of a sudden and unexpected change in the horses at the end of a stage occurred once at St. Albans; where, so far from there being no horses to go on there was an excess, two teams being ready to be put to, though only one, of course, could be used.

The Halifax 'Hope' was horsed out of London by a man carrying on his business in Little Britain. Some differences had arisen between him and Sherman, of the Bull and Mouth, who was desirous of getting the 'Hope' removed to his house; but not having succeeded in accomplishing this, he resorted to a practical and effectual mode of carrying out his wish. On the up-journey of the coach, when it reached St. Albans very early in the morning, he had four horses ready to be put to, notwithstanding that the proper team was also there; but, probably prepared for any obstacles he might find to his horses being put in, he was ready with sufficient assistance, and actually had the coach taken on by his own horses, changing at his own stables between London and St. Albans, and having the coach driven into the Bull and Mouth yard.

What the precise nature of the dispute was, or how it was eventually settled, I don't know, except that Sherman so far won the day as to secure the coach, which ran regularly from the Bull and Mouth till knocked off the road by the railways.

Having now given an instance in which there were not any horses provided in the regular way to take on a coach, and another in which there was an excess of horses for the purpose, I will say a word or two about the coachman, and what would be the consequence of any unexpected difficulty with him.

In towns of any size, on the main roads where coaches did not merely run through, after stopping to change, but either stopped for meals, or because they were at the end of the journey, there generally might be found a spare coachman, some man who was out of employment, who had brought his coach down and had not to go out again until the next day or night, or some one about the inn possessing the capability of driving a coach, and only too glad, perhaps, if any opportunity occurred, of putting his abilities to the test. In the daytime there were generally some persons standing about a large coaching inn at the time of arrival or departure of a coach, but in the night there were not any spectators to witness this event.

Coaches have been stopped in the course of their journeys from various causes, such as highwaymen,

J. Sturgess del. et lith

Hanhart imp.

READY TO GO - NO ONE TO DRIVE

accidents of different kinds, as break-downs and up-sets, also from floods or deep snows, but I do not know of more than one coach having to stop in the night in a large town on one of the principal roads from London for want of a coachman.

The occasion to which I refer happened on the London and Bristol road, on which a night-coach called the 'Monarch' ran, and would reach Reading about two o'clock in the morning. Here the coachman was—or, as I have heard it insinuated, pretended to be—taken ill, and unable to proceed with the coach.

Here was a pretty dilemma: a coach-load of passengers, and with luggage well piled up on the roof, was standing in the street with the horses ready to go on, but no one to drive them!

Sometimes the guards could drive; in such cases there was little difficulty in getting them temporarily to fill the coachman's place. But it happened that on this occasion the guard was not competent to undertake the duty, and questions began to be asked as to how and when the coach was to get on, when some one connected with the inn, probably the boots, said there was a young man staying there who was very fond of driving, and sometimes drove some of the coaches; and it was suggested that he might be roused up, and asked to undertake to drive the coach up to London. No one being able to propose

another plan, measures were at once taken to put this one into execution. Some one went to his bedroom, woke him up, and asked if he would take on the coach. He expressed his willingness to do so, dressed himself as expeditiously as he could, went down, and found the coach and horses ready in the street waiting for him to start. He at once mounted the box and drove up to London into the Bull and Mouth yard, to which place the coach then ran. He was a small, thin young fellow, only about eighteen, and not being a professional coachman had no idea that he would be required to take the coach down again on its way out of London that night, but concluded that some man would be found to discharge the duty. He was, however, requested to undertake it, and drove down to Newbury, fifty-six miles from London, being the place where the coachman always changed.

The young man was intended for the medical profession, but from family circumstances he abandoned that career, and eventually became a professional coachman.

For about twelve persons to be sitting upon a 'Monarch' in the night, in the main street of a large town, without any means of progressing, was not an ordinary occurrence, and the passengers certainly were not 'monarchs of all they surveyed.'

The task of undertaking to drive the coach in this instance was not so difficult as it might have been in other parts of the country, as the road between Reading and London is so level that there is not anything that can really be called a hill throughout the whole length. It would have been otherwise had a coachman been wanted on the lower ground, where he would have had Marlborough and some other hills to negotiate. The coach, moreover, was a heavy loading one, not travelling at a fast pace, or very strictly limited to time, so that there was not any risk of an upset in consequence of having to go at great speed.

CHAPTER X.

COACHING BUSINESS.

As coaching and mail-travelling on the roads were always strictly carried on as business undertakings, it may not be altogether uninteresting to see something of how they were managed, what were their expenses, what their receipts, and how the money was divided among the different proprietors. It was once said by Sir Henry Parnell, M.P., who took a great deal of interest in road-travelling, and acquired a great deal of information about it, that it was necessary to be on one's guard in listening to statements on any points connected with coach business, and that he would trust to nothing but the actual accounts of the earnings of the different kinds of coaches, whether ordinary stage-coaches, by night or day, or mail-coaches. The expense, he added, actually incurred in horsing the mails would be better ascertained by seeing what the profits were which the proprietors divided among themselves, because that would give the means of ascertaining at what rate they would

undertake the horsing of a coach, and at what rate they would decline to continue to horse one. But he said it was difficult to see those accounts and acquire that knowledge; though the accounts were so kept and settled that there was no trade in which the persons engaged knew so correctly what profits they were making, as the settlements took place every four weeks.

He was engaged for years in overcoming the opposition of the Postmaster-General to some improvements and acceleration of the Holyhead mail, and in the course of that time he made it his business to get all the information he could upon the subject of mail-coaches. This he thought he had obtained in a very complete manner, as Mr. Waterhouse, who was then (in 1836) the proprietor of the Swan with two Necks coach-office, allowed him to see all his books and explained everything he wished to know with regard to the horsing of the mails; he also acquired a knowledge of the business of stage-coaches from the son of his land agent being a proprietor of one of the Holyhead coaches, constantly examining and seeing his books, and exercising a sort of superintendence over his establishment.

The Swan with two Necks establishment, now considerably altered and converted into a goods

department of Messrs. Chaplin and Horne's railway-carrying business, is very different from what it was in the little narrow lane in the coaching-days. The City, indeed, is vastly altered in many places from what it was in those days, and many of the coach-offices, where a considerable business was done, were situated in narrow by-streets or lanes.

Apropos of this, there used to be a story told of a medical man of considerable practice in the City requiring a coachman thoroughly acquainted with the geography of the City to drive him on his rounds to see his patients. An applicant for the situation called upon the doctor with a view to being engaged. The first thing the doctor did was to put the man through a course of examination on his geographical knowledge, in which, according to his own notion, the man was perfect, saying that he knew every place in the City well, and that the doctor could not name one with which he was unacquainted. Not satisfied with this confident and sweeping assertion, the doctor proceeded to test the accuracy and truth of the man's statements in this way:

'Do you know the Wonderful Bird, Boy Lane, Timber Street, Reasonable Place?'

This was rather too much for the man, who, after some consideration, was reluctantly obliged to admit

that he was not acquainted with the localities referred to.

The doctor then put the same question, in fact, though differently expressed, and said:

'Do you know the Swan with two Necks, Lad Lane, Wood Street, Cheapside?'

Of course the man did.

To return, after this digression, to coaching business. Quite concurring in Sir Henry Parnell's observation as to not trusting to anything about coaching business but the actual accounts, I do not intend to set up my knowledge in competition with his experience, or to ask my readers to receive my statements without the necessary precaution he advises; hence I shall set out some coaching accounts copied from the originals, and therefore to be depended upon. Accounts, perhaps, as a rule, are not very interesting things to read. Of course, if they happen to show a large balance in your favour, and of which you are to be an early recipient, it is another matter. I think, however, the accounts I am giving, as they are neither long nor complicated, and relate to different coaches and roads, may not be found altogether unacceptable. They show also how they were made up, and the money divided every twenty-eight days, and in this respect differ, I think, from those kept in any other trade. Although the

proprietors were all considered partners, each man provided his own horses and harness, and any loss by death or otherwise in his stock fell upon himself solely, and was not borne by the general body.

As has been already observed, no traders knew so well what profits they were making as persons engaged in the coaching trade, as their settlements took place every four weeks; in fact, they might be said to resemble what Sydney Smith, I think, described as 'the beautiful simplicity of the three per cents.'

Coaching might be called a ready-money business, the fares being paid at the time of booking the place, or at the end of the journey at furthest. There were some persons known as regular customers, or with a large carrying business to and from London and manufacturing places, who might run short accounts; but the country partners always expected to receive their share of the earnings at every monthly settlement, which rendered it incumbent upon the endmen, who usually received all the money, to have it in hand ready to be paid over to the different middle-ground men.

A person who was perfectly conversant with coaching accounts, having to make up and keep those of some twelve or thirteen different coaches, drew up

the following statement principally as showing the heavy taxation to which the coaching business was subject, in order to illustrate the great difference there was in this respect between land and water travelling:

STATEMENT OF DUTIES AND OTHER EXPENDITURE OF THE 'WELLINGTON' COACH FROM LONDON TO NEWCASTLE, 364 DAYS.

	£	s.	d.
Duty for four inside and eleven out, sixpence a double mile; that is, up and down, 278 miles -	2,529	16	0
Stamps for receipts on payment of ditto - -	1	12	6
Four licenses for coaches being used successively up and down - - - - - - -	20	0	0
Assessed taxes on coachmen and guards - - -	17	10	0
	£2,568	18	6

But subsequently to the month of November, 1836, the duty paid was one-seventh less, or £2,168 8s., the coach-proprietors having been compelled, from the deterioration in their trade, to stop the coaches one day in the week.

So far, it will be seen that the taxes payable to Government amounted to a considerable sum.

The other charges incidental to the working of the coach were put down as—

	£	s.	d.
Tolls annually - - - - - - - -	2,537	7	8
Expense of the coaches hired at a rate per mile -	1,274	0	0
Other incidental matters about - - - -	800	0	0
	£4,611	7	8

The tolls and coach-hire were also reduced one-seventh, in consequence of the stoppage of one day in seven, as before stated, leaving the annual expense of the coach still at about £6,000, without reckoning the horses, of which there were about 250 in constant service.

On the other side of the account, taking it in comparison with steam conveyance, the rates of travelling were :

FARES BY COACH FROM LONDON TO NEWCASTLE.

Inside - - - - - -	£4 10 0
Outside - - - - - -	2 5 0

With road expenses.

By steamers passengers were conveyed the same distance :

In best cabin - - - -	£3 0 0
In fore cabin - - - -	2 0 0

Including provisions and all expenses.

From London to York the coach fares were :

Inside - - - - - -	£3 5 0
Outside - - - - - -	1 14 0

London to York, *vid* Hull, by steamer :

Best cabin - - - - - -	£0 8 0
Fore cabin - - - - - -	0 4 6

Expenses not included.

Before recording any of the actual sharing accounts of mail or coach proprietors, I think a few words as to the general and indispensable expenses incidental to

the business may not be out of place, especially as they varied greatly from the expenses of coaching in the present day, and therefore may prove interesting to those who are now carrying it on either for profit or pleasure.

I will commence with turnpikes, which certainly were a heavy item in the expenses of a coach, averaging as they did, according to the experience of some of the large coach-proprietors, no less a sum than 11s. 6d. a mile a month. All the turnpikes in and around London having been removed, this sum does not appear among the disbursements now. The assessed taxes of various descriptions, now either considerably reduced or altogether discontinued, helped to swell up the list of expenses. There was a payment of £5 for every coachman and guard, a like sum for every coach, so that in cases where two coaches were running, one up and the other down, the amount would be £10, while for long distances requiring three or four coaches to be used, there would be a proportionate increase.

The next important item of disbursement was the duty on a stage-coach—or perhaps it should more properly be called a duty on the passengers, as it was progressive, and dependent upon the number of passengers the coach was licensed to convey, though it had to be paid irrespective of any passengers at all being carried.

At one time it was fixed at threepence a mile for a coach licensed to carry fifteen passengers, which would cover four inside and eleven out; another passenger making a total of sixteen, would have added another halfpenny a mile to the duty.

In various years, however, these duties were altered both as to the amount charged and the number allowed to be carried, so that no definite calculation of the expenditure under this head can be arrived at. It, however, was sufficiently important to make it worth the coach-proprietor's while to reduce it to the lowest amount practicable, and in order to accomplish this it was usual when the winter season was coming on to lessen the number for which the license was taken out at the Stamp Office, so that during the winter months a coach might only be licensed to carry eight out and four inside; but when the summer came round again and trade was found to be increasing, the license was altered at the Stamp Office for the increased number, and payment of the additional duty consequent upon it. This duty although considerable, was looked upon by the coach proprietors in the light of a protection, preventing persons from recklessly starting coaches without the means of keeping them on the road, but seriously interfering with those established, and probably entailing a considerable reduction in their fare

—hence the proprietors did not desire the total abolition of the tax.

It may be asked, perhaps, what check there was on a proprietor taking out a license for a small number of passengers, and paying the reduced scale of duty accordingly, but carrying the larger number on his coach, which, of course, remained unaltered, and capable of carrying the larger, although only licensed for the smaller number. The answer is this—there were in those days many penalties to which coach-proprietors were liable for any trivial infraction of the law, and among others was a penalty for having the luggage above a certain height on the roof.

As these were penalties to be recovered by those who would take the trouble, and did not mind the odium attached to the necessary proceedings, there were some men who were perfectly notorious as common informers, principally against persons committing offences on the road against the Turnpike or other Acts. As the informers got half, or perhaps in some cases more, of the penalty, they made a living by it. Facilities were afforded by the Act of Parliament for getting the luggage measured, while the number a coach was licensed to carry was bound to be conspicuously painted on it in the place and manner from time to time specified; so, in the event of the coachman taking up a passenger

over his proper number, the common informer, who was somewhere on the road looking out, would count the passengers, and, seeing the number the coach was licensed for, would lay an information before a magistrate against the proprietor, and obtain a share of the penalty inflicted on him for carrying more than his number. It must by no means be supposed that the common informer confined his attentions to the coach-proprietor, as he was ready to pounce down upon traveller, post-boy, or driver of waggon, cart, or any other vehicle whom he found infringing the laws of the road or the Turnpike Act. A turnpike-gate keeper also might afford him occasionally a slight increase in his income by some breach of the provisions of the Turnpike Act—neglecting to have his name or table of tolls up over the turnpike-house, demanding too much toll, omitting to give a ticket, etc.

There was yet another item of expenditure in the coach-proprietor's account, which, like the duty, was payable according to the number of miles the coach ran, but was in no way dependent upon the number of passengers which the coach was licensed to carry. The mileage for the hire of the coach was, as now, purely a matter of arrangement between the coach-proprietor and the builder, varying but little in the scale—from twopence to threepence a mile would probably cover the highest and lowest charge, and

the general average paid by the London proprietors may be taken at twopence halfpenny. The coach-builder had his coaches running all through the year, and thus earning him money daily, with the certainty where it was a popular and well-established coach that it would continue; but, on the other hand, if a fresh coach was put on and found not to answer, it would remain on his hands, and could not be put on the road again without undergoing the process of repainting and lettering. In a very few instances coach-proprietors bought the coaches outright, but sometimes one proprietor would have the coach and arrange with his partners to hire it of him at a mileage, as in the ordinary way from a builder.

Other expenses there were to be provided for before any sharing could take place, such as wages of coachmen and guards, advertising, booking-offices, etc.; the main expense of getting the coach through the country—that is, horsing it—was different from the foregoing, which may be designated general, being deducted in the first instance out of the total receipts of the whole concern, while the horsing expenses fell upon the different proprietors individually according to the length of ground they covered.

The following is a sharing account, as made out amongst all the proprietors; but it appears to be for

fourteen days only instead of the usual period of twenty-eight:

'MONARCH'—LONDON AND BRISTOL NIGHT-COACH FROM 15TH TO 28TH JUNE, 1834.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
RECEIPTS	414	8	6	DISBURSEMENTS:			
				Mr. Nelson.			
				Washing - 14 0			
				Oil - - 18 0			
				Taxes - 3 10			
				Porter and Inspector 25 4			
					3	1	2
				Mr. Niblett.			
				Tolls - £32 9 8			
				Wages* 32 0 0			
				Mileage 19 14 8			
				Settling 1 1 0			
				Oil - 0 18 0			
				Washing 0 14 0			
				Duty - 42 14 9			
				Inspector 0 10 0			
					130	2	1
				Shares, £2 5s. per Mile.			
				Mr. Nelson, $24\frac{1}{4}$ - £54 11 3			
				Mr. Niblett, 34 - 76 10 0			
				Mr. Lane, 19 - 42 15 0			
				Mr. Hunt, 23 - 51 15 0			
				Mr. Batten, $14\frac{3}{4}$ - 33 3 9			
				Mr. Hicks, 10 - 22 10 0			
				0 0 3			
					281	5	3
	£414	8	6		£414	8	6

* It may be noticed that in this account there is a sum of £32 charged as wages; this was for the coachmen, four

From this it will be observed that the coach would earn £4 10s. a mile in twenty-eight days, a rate at which the proprietors could work it with a fair profit.

The next account, although on the same road, is made out differently, being a mail instead of a stage coach account. For instance, the coachmen only received a small weekly sum from the proprietor, as they took fees from the passengers, as did also the guards, although they were the servants of the Postmaster-General; but he only paid them the trifling sum of ten shillings a week, on which, of course, they could not have lived, especially as they were obliged to have two lodging-places, one in London and one at Bristol. As on the other coaches, the distance between the two places being only 125 miles, three guards performed the duty; but in consequence of the arrangements by the Post-Office authorities, as to the time of the mails leaving London and Bristol, the proprietors found it more convenient

in number—being two, one up and the other down, between London and Newbury, fifty-six miles, and two below, between Newbury and Bristol, sixty-nine miles—and three guards, one up and the other down all the way, and one at rest; one man resting every third night. The coachman and guards were all paid by the proprietors of this coach, in order to relieve the passengers from the expense, and what was considered sometimes the annoyance of being frequently called upon to take out their money for the purpose.

for two men to drive up and down between London and Newbury, while another drove down to Calne, thirty-one miles, where the coachman, who had driven up there from Bristol, returned with the down mail. In the meantime the mails had passed near Hungerford, another coachman, who had met the up-mail at Calne, taking it on to Newbury, so that altogether there were five coachmen employed, instead of four, as on the stage-coaches. Another reason might have been that the proprietors considered that driving sixty-nine miles without any stoppage, and all night-work, on such a fast mail as the Bristol was too hard work, and that it was a better plan to have a break at Calne.

It further had this advantage, that the proprietor who horsed the mail up and down between Newbury and Calne appointed his own coachmen, so that his horses were not driven by any persons but those in his own service, and under his sole control. It also happened that Mr. Waller, who was the proprietor on this part of the road, had two sons, one or both of whom always drove the mail, while a man named Tom Mower, who married a daughter of Waller's, drove from Calne downwards. That driving, although with him it was all night-work, must have suited his constitution, appears from the fact that he drove the mail for twenty-five years, up to the time of its being

taken off the road by the Great Western Railway, and he died within the last few years a good deal over eighty years of age.

The London and Bath mail, which ran through Devizes and Melksham, was horsed by different persons from the Bristol below Newbury, and having to travel only fifty-two miles from there to Bath, adopted the same plan as the coaches having four coachmen only, and changed them both up and down at Newbury.

BRISTOL AND LONDON ROYAL MAIL, FOUR WEEKS, FROM 1ST TO 28TH DECEMBER, 1839.

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.
Mr. Townsend -	255	14	7
Mr. Chaplin - -	379	19	0
	£635	13	7

DISBURSEMENTS.				£	s.	d.
Mr. Lane.						
Settling -	£2	2	0			
West's parcels -	2	2	0			
				4	4	0
Mr. Townsend.						
Coachmen's wages -				10	16	0
Mr. Hunt.						
Inspecting at Newbury - -				1	1	0
Mr. Chaplin.						
Duty and stamp	£28	10	4			
Coachmen	8	8	0			
Runners -	1	13	4			
Inspector	1	8	0			
Advertising -	0	16	0			
Mr. Lovegrove's mileage, 13 miles at £4 4s.	54	12	0			
				95	7	8
Shares, at £4 14s. 0¼d.						
Mr. Townsend 13 -				61	2	6
Mr. Lane - 19 -				89	6	6
Mr. Waller - 31½ -				148	2	3
Mr. Hunt - 17 -				79	18	7
Mr. Lovegrove - 6½ -				30	11	3
Mr. Chaplin - 24½ -				115	3	10
111½				£635	13	7

For some reason, which I am unable to explain, although Mr. Lovegrove horsed the Bristol mail nineteen miles and a half, as shown in the above

account, he only received the same mileage as the other proprietors, at the rate of £4 14s. on six miles and a half, but was paid a fixed sum of four guineas a mile upon the other thirteen miles. I rather think it must have been a private arrangement between himself and Mr. Chaplin, whose name in the sharing account, it will be seen, is down for twenty-four and a half miles only, while in the Post-Office contract it is down for twenty-eight miles, seven furlongs; but he only actually provided the horses as far as Maidenhead.

The two mails, that is, the Bath and the Bristol, according to the Post-Office contract were horsed throughout thus:

LONDON AND BATH.

	M.	F.
Chaplin, William	28	7
Lovegrove, Robert	17	6
March, James	12	1
Hunt, Samuel	11	1
Company	7	2
Parsons, Edward	14	0
Lane, William	19	3

LONDON AND BRISTOL.

	M.	F.
Chaplin, William	28	7
Lovegrove, Robert	17	6
Hunt, Samuel	12	1
Waller, John	31	3
Lane, William	18	3
Townsend, John and Son	12	4

The following is a sharing account of a London, Gloucester, and Hereford coach, showing the earnings

daily or nightly—I have not the name of the coach, and do not know whether it was a day or night coach :

1806.		£	s.	d.
	Balance -	2	18	11
Sept. 8.	Monday -	26	7	3
„ 9.	Tuesday -	33	19	6
„ 10.	Wednesday	29	4	0
„ 11.	Thursday -	33	18	6
„ 12.	Friday -	23	3	8
„ 13.	Saturday -	37	9	6
„ 14.	Sunday -	33	10	9
„ 15.	Monday -	11	5	4
„ 16.	Tuesday -	37	1	0
„ 17.	Wednesday	26	2	0
„ 18.	Thursday -	28	12	4
„ 19.	Friday -	21	12	0
„ 20.	Saturday -	20	3	6
„ 21.	Sunday -	45	11	10
„ 22.	Monday -	22	8	10
„ 23.	Tuesday -	36	13	8
„ 24.	Wednesday	28	16	8
„ 25.	Thursday -	37	8	3
„ 26.	Friday -	29	12	0
„ 27.	Saturday -	44	0	1
„ 28.	Sunday -	32	4	6
„ 29.	Monday -	21	4	3
„ 30.	Tuesday -	32	16	4
Oct. 1.	Wednesday	13	15	6
„ 2.	Thursday -	46	12	5
„ 3.	Friday -	23	19	17
„ 4.	Saturday -	23	8	0
„ 5.	Sunday -	38	7	2
		£842	7	4

1806. Sept. 2.	£	s.	d.
Expenses at Oxford	9	7	7
Wright, printing and advertising -	24	12	6
Two post-chaises -	9	5	6
Duty from London to Gloucester -	61	17	8
Ditto, Gloucester to Hereford - -	10	0	0
Tolls - - -	61	0	8
Extra tolls - -	5	18	11
Mileage - -	41	14	9
Booking and greasing, London -	5	14	0
Ditto, Oxford -	2	16	0
Ditto, Cheltenham	2	2	0
Ditto, Gloucester -	3	2	0
Ditto, Hereford -	2	8	0
Look-out - -	2	16	0
Booking at Beaconsfield - - -	7	7	0
Lamp oil, two months - -	4	14	3
Post-chaise - -	2	5	9
New lamps - -	1	2	0
	259	4	7
Shared £126 0s. 3d. at £4 15s. -	599	18	6
	859	3	1
	842	7	4
Balance -	£16	15	7

By a Portsmouth 'Diligence' account from March 26 to September 29, 1783, the sharing was £8 2s. 3d per mile.

	£	s.	d.
The gross earnings - - -	845	8	8
Disbursements - - - -	261	4	2
Seventy-two miles—divided -	£584	4	6

The disbursements above seem to be heavy, but, as will be seen, they were made at different places along the road by tacit arrangement, and no inquiries were made into them, nor was any verification of them required.

The payments for post-chaises must, I presume, have been for forwarding travellers when the coaches were full.

The charge of seven guineas for booking at Beaconsfield seems heavy, and exceeds even those in London and other places on the road, but why I cannot explain. Notwithstanding, however, the heavy disbursements, the sharing of £4 15s. a mile is good.

Having given some instances of the amounts received and disbursed in conducting the English coaching business, I will only add one of the 'Commercial' and 'Perseverance' coaches running between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the mails also working between the same places.

The settlement accounts of the Edinburgh and Glasgow mail-coaches do not include any items for tolls, which I cannot understand, as in Scotland the mails were subject to tolls which amounted to considerable sums, as the Glasgow and Carlisle mail

paid in daily tolls at the gates within three different trusts on the road, £8 4s., or £2,993 yearly. I rather think that the items in the Edinburgh and Glasgow mail accounts, entered as 'paid out' and 'paid rent,' must represent the tolls, especially as they form a considerable element in the disbursements, and I do not see to what else they can be applicable; and moreover, the Act of Parliament under which mails had been exempt from tolls in Scotland was repealed in the year 1815, and thereupon an additional rate of postage to the amount of one halfpenny was imposed upon all letters in Scotland; but with this regulation, that where the letter might be a double or treble one no more than the halfpenny was to be charged as excess over English letters.

How far the expenses of horsing a mail or coach in Scotland may correspond, or rather might have corresponded (in the days when mails and coaches ran), with those in England, I have no means of stating; but probably the exact locality, as in England, made a great deal of difference, as a coach-proprietor some distance down in the country could afford to do it at a much lower rate than a London man. B. W. Horne, the large coach-proprietor of the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, and other places, said a man could horse a coach the other side of Stamford at fifty per cent. less than he could, because they got everything on a cheaper scale.

'COMMERCIAL' AND 'PERSEVERANCE' COACH SETTLEMENT FROM 11TH MARCH TO 6TH APRIL, 1839, BETWEEN EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW.

Proprietors.	Receipts.	Disbursements.	Miles.	Shares.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Mr. Piper :		In this space in the original account are entered a number of payments by Mr. Piper for mileage, duty, tolls, etc., amounting altogether to - - 101 10 4	13	30 11 6
C. L. £118 4 8				
P. 84 2 6	202 7 2			
- -	2 19 6			
	205 6 8			
Mr. Scott - -	- - - -	- - - - - -	13	30 11 6
Mr. Kippen :				
C. L. 7 17 6				
P. 16 1 8				
	23 19 2	- - - - - -	15	35 5 0
Mr. Scott - -	- - - -	- - - - - -	8	18 16 0
Mr. Mein - -	- - - -	- - - - - -	8	18 16 0
Mr. Bain :		Here are entered in like manner the various disbursements made by Mr. Bain, including repairs to lamp from overturning of the coach, and £17 surgeon's bill from the same cause, a further sum of £10 being paid by some one else - - 40 19 6	17	39 19 0
C. L. 69 15 8				
P. 11 10 6				
Twice allowed last settlement 4 18 0				
	86 4 2			
Mr. Mein :		Here are Mr. Mein's payments, including a new hat, at breaking down of coach, 23s. 6d. - 48 19 10	17	39 19 0
C. L. 42 3 6				
P. 47 14 2				
	89 17 8			
Received - -	405 7 8	191 9 8		
	191 9 8	Disbursed at £2 7s. per mile	91	213 18 0
Balance - - -	213 18 0			

This does not seem to have been a very prosperous undertaking, but possibly the overturn of the coach may have had something to do with it, although there is not any entry in the account referring to the accident, besides those I have mentioned. The hat, I presume, belonged to a passenger, and judging by the price, must have been a first-rate new beaver.

EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW MAIL SETTLEMENT, EDINBURGH MAIL-COACHES FROM 6TH MAY TO 16TH JUNE, 1838.

Contractors.	Received.	Disbursements.			Miles.	Shares.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Mr. Bain - -	226 12 6	Paid out	11 7 2			
		Office -	3 0 0			
		Oil -	4 4 0			
		Mail -	0 7 0			
		Coachman's wages & duty -	3 6 0			
		Settling accounts	4 4 0			
		Fraction	0 0 7			
				26 8 9	16¾	109 19 10
Walker - -	176 2 11	Paid out	4 6 0			
		Office -	3 0 0			
		Mail -	0 7 0			
		Coachman's wages & duty -	3 6 0			
				10 19 0	16¾	109 19 10
Mitchell - -		- -	- -	-	9¾	64 0 6
Forrest - -	4 4 8	- -	- -	-	6	39 8 0
Cowper - -	4 2 8	- -	- -	-	7⅓	47 12 2
Kippen - -	1 10 2	- -	- -	-	7½	49 5 0
Piper, morning -	182 14 8	Paid rent	1 12 0			
		Office -	3 0 0			
		Duty -	30 16 0			
		Coachman's wages & duty -	2 5 0			
				37 13 0	26	170 14 8
„ evening -	151 18 6	Paid rent	43 16 4			
		Office -	3 0 0			
		Oil -	4 4 0			
		Duty -	30 2 0			
		Coachman's duty -	0 3 0			
				81 5 4		
Received - -	747 6 1					
Disbursements -	156 6 1			156 6 1	90	591 0 0
To divide - -	591 0 0	At £6 11s. 4d. per mile.				

I don't know whether the Scotch mails in general paid better than the English, but the accounts of those running between Edinburgh and Glasgow show much better paying concerns than the Bristol, in which, as will be seen by the foregoing account, the proprietors only shared £4 14s. a mile, while the Scotch proprietors divided at the rate of £6 11s. 4d.; but the great traffic between Edinburgh and Glasgow most likely filled the mails every day both ways.

I do not think that the London and Glasgow, London and Edinburgh, or any of the English mails did so well; several I know did not pay half as much, and their earnings were obliged to be supplemented by an extra allowance from the Postmaster-General in order to get the proprietors along the roads to continue working them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW COACH AT ST. STEPHEN'S.

GENERALLY coaches are put upon the road by gentlemen who undertake them simply from their fondness for anything connected with horses and driving; and they join as partners without the slightest regard to, or perhaps knowledge of, each other's political opinions.

In the year 1880, in the month of May, when the coaching season generally commences, it seems that the taste for coaching had found its way even into the ranks of politicians, and that two concerns were started to run against each other, one being worked by the Government, and the other by the Opposition.

What the result of the schemes has been since they were set on foot in 1880, the public have had ample opportunities of judging for themselves by what they may have read in the daily papers.

There was a good deal of trouble upon the Northampton road, and presumably some strong language

must have been used, as there was much discussion, and very strong objections were made respecting some one connected with that place taking an oath and swearing.

The Opposition has not, of course, been a very paying concern, as ever since the 'Midlothian' has been on the road they have not been receiving any allowance or mileage from the Government. All their supporters have been *outsiders*, while the other concern carries all the *insiders*, and although the Opposition have made some attempts to upset their rivals, or run them off the road, they have hitherto been unsuccessful.

The following is an account which appeared in the year before referred to, under the title of 'The New Coach at St. Stephen's:'

'It is now no longer a matter of doubt that a new coach is to be put on the road for this season at least, and if carried on successfully, as appears most probably will be the case, it will be taken off the road early in August and not run during the depth of the winter, but will be put on again in February.

'It is to be called the "Midlothian," and according to present arrangements will commence running regularly about the 20th of May, it having been found impossible to get the whole concern into working order, and all the teams arranged in their

places before that time, when it is hoped by the professional that he will be able to hold them all well together—a point on which it is rumoured he anticipates little difficulty, and, indeed, I hear he looks forward to its being quite a *Bright* concern.

'"Merry Pebbles" is the professional who has started it, and he has worked hard for some months in getting together his stock, having selected them from England, Ireland, and Scotland, and spared no trouble or exertion in the undertaking, having even been so energetic as to *stump* several parts of England and Scotland for the purpose.

'Several, however, that he had selected, and that it was expected would have been worked in the concern, were found to be unavailable, as after the most vigorous efforts, and much expense and time, they could not be got up to the *poll*, and were not fit to put in as leaders.

'The upshot, however, of the almost herculean labours of the professional was that he succeeded in getting together an extensive stock, so numerous that he has been unable to find places to put them all into.

'The professional is a person of great experience, and has had the management of several undertakings before, but about the year 1875 he was unable to hold his team together, and was driven off the road by

the "Conservative," which was then the Opposition, and has been kept on the road through Beaconsfield ever since.

'The difficulty of starting this new coach has been considerable, one or two other professionals having been employed in the first instance to make all the preliminary arrangements, it having been understood that Merry Pebbles had cut his stick, and expressed his intention not to go on the road again.

'It appearing, however, that the coach could not be started without him, his advice and assistance were urgently solicited, and eventually he was induced to resume his old position and take the reins in hand again. Accordingly he set to work, and having got some of his teams together, put them into their places, and worked them down on a trial trip to Windsor. They were taken down there by train, when it was found there was no coach ready to put them into, and they had to be walked from the station.

'There have been several interviews and meetings submitting them for approval, and it is understood that the teams are approved, and the several places in which they are to work definitely settled. Having been selected with great care and judgment, and many of them having been in harness and done a good deal of hard work before, it is not anticipated

that any of them will turn out very unruly, or kick over the traces, still less that they will jib or refuse to collar their work; in fact, if any danger is to be apprehended, it will be from their bolting, some of them being in harness for their first season, and being inclined to go very much ahead, more so, indeed, than any that have been put into work before. Being, however, so much overstocked, the professional will be able to get rid of any unmanageable member in his teams, and select quieter ones from his reserve.

'In order to provide for the event of illness of the professional, or to help him in keeping the concern on the road, he will be assisted by one or two professional whips, whom he will expect to be ready at all times to whip up any of the stock that may be hanging back or not coming well up to their work when wanted.

'To make each one in a team do his equal share of the work has ever been a difficulty with the best of coachmen, so one can easily appreciate the labour the new professional will have to undergo in schooling several new and untried ones.

'There was some apprehension that the stock from Ireland, numbering thirty or more, might turn out sufficiently awkward to upset the coach, or, in the event of their being discarded, might be taken up to

work in the Opposition; but there being a sufficient majority of the English stock to dispense with the Irish altogether, this has ceased to cause any alarm or anxiety, and it is not expected that there will be any serious obstruction to the working of the coach.

'To get all the teams of a coach into harness and in their places is an undertaking requiring much time and patience, and there will be a good deal of *swearing in* getting all the stock of this coach into their places; but to prevent any disorderly conduct or any irregularities on the road after it has started, a person has been agreed upon by both the proprietors of this and the Opposition to speak if he finds it requisite at any time to stop such improprieties, and it will therefore be the duty of the *speaker* to put down any attempts there may be to cause obstructions such as occurred on more than one occasion last season, when the coach was so hindered and harassed by the Opposition that it was kept at work all night.

'In order to be prepared for any contingencies that might arise, on all the teams being first brought together, an official was present with, not exactly "a short Tommy," but a blackthorn stick, or black rod, or something of that description; but there was not any occasion to make use of it, though some of the unruly Irish ones may require hitting below the bar if they

get up to any of their tricks to interfere vexatiously with the regular working of the "Midlothian." It appears to be necessary that some, if not all, of the stock which has been fixed on to work the coach should be sent back to the country to the places from whence they came, and accordingly one sent up from Oxford has to go back there, and be again approved by the people who sent him up; but there seems to be a difference of opinion among the Oxford people, and as, according to the old adage, "All is not gold that glitters," so *ver non semper viret*, and it is rumoured that they will not return the teamster again, but keep him out of the coach if they can.

'As usual, there will be an Opposition coach run this season, but they do not expect it will pay, as the public will now support and patronize the "Midlothian," the proprietors of which have been out in the cold and working the Opposition for the last five years without any remuneration, and are now greatly elated at the prospect of a successful season. The professional has for some time past been undergoing an immense amount of fatigue, both bodily and mental, but it does not appear to have injuriously affected his brain, and, indeed, it is said that he suffers less from *dizziness* than he has done for the last five years.

'The coaching bills have not yet been issued, but

the route will be rendered as attractive as possible, no doubt, as the professional stated recently that he had no less than thirty-one subjects to embody in them; how far they may interest the general public, or those reading them, is another thing; they may, perhaps, be treated with indifference, or be comprised in the murder of the innocents.

'Who is to be guard on the coach seems to be at present undecided, but most likely some one will be wanted to put the drag on, unless the professional does it himself. As regards the blowing the horn there will be no difficulty about that, as there are plenty in the concern capable of performing the task.

'Just a word or two about the Opposition coach before concluding. It will be worked on the upper ground by two men of experience on the Salisbury and Beaconsfield roads, while the lower will be managed by one who has always worked harmoniously with his chiefs, and is not likely to cut up rough with them, though he may be found rather *cross* with his opponents. The Opposition coach is what has been running under the name of the "Conservative," but is now off the road, or rather running as the same concern under different auspices.

'Their leaders have always worked well, and their teams have been properly put together, coupled up,

and held in hand. Should the summer prove a dry one, as no doubt it will, to the Opposition, so far at least as regards the remunerative working of it, they can easily refresh themselves by resorting to Coope, while the "Midlothian" can draw upon Bass.

'It is not expected that there will be a great amount of work done by either coach, but there will no doubt be some galloping towards the end of the season.

'As work will be resumed again in February, the stock will not be changed or sent to the hammer, according to the usual practice. They will most likely be turned loose, but it will not be necessary that they should "go to the country again," as the phrase runs: It is said that Government provides the oil for the wheels of the "Midlothian," and keeping all this coach in working order, but the Opposition have to find their own grease.

'Finally, it is believed that when it comes to the "sharing," the "Midlothian" will turn out to be the best paying coach on the road this season. With them it is no pikes, no nothing to pay—teams and their stabling (or residences) provided by the country in and about Whitehall.

'N.B.—At the end of the season a whitebait dinner at Greenwich is generally given to all those connected with the coach, although the professional discontinued it some years since.'

CHAPTER XII.

HORSE SELLING ADVERTISEMENTS.

In the days of the road there were not so many horse repositories as now, to which you could resort, and in the course of a week pick up, without difficulty, a large number of horses suitable for coach and post-master's business. Those persons who kept horses, and resided anywhere in the vicinity of one of the main roads, could generally, if having an animal to dispose of, find a purchaser in one of the coach-proprietors, whose principal if not only requirement was that it should be able to go. It might be one that would rear up, lie down, kick, jib, or bolt, any of which little eccentricities would be overcome after a few days or nights of work in the coach ; and a horse gifted with any of these peculiarities would naturally be bought at a low figure. Coach-horses were bought pretty much as they were sold when a coach was taken off the road, when they were sold by auction, the only description in the catalogue

being the colour, and whether horse or mare, as 'a brown horse,' 'a chestnut mare,' etc.

All the numerous and glowing descriptions to be found in the newspapers at this time of horses for sale by private contract would have been thrown away entirely upon the coach-proprietor, as in the first place he would be too good a judge, and too much accustomed to have a great number of horses constantly passing through his hands, to be in any way influenced by them; and secondly, if the descriptions were true to the letter, the animal would be parted with only at too high a figure to suit the coach-proprietor.

From what I have heard there is frequently a great mystery about horses advertised to be sold privately somewhere down in an obscure mews, the intending purchaser having to wait while the coachman is fetched from the 'public' round the corner.

As an instance of the mode in which persons having a horse of dubious character to dispose of would resort to some coach-proprietor in the hope of his becoming a purchaser, I give the following, related by a man who was himself a coach-proprietor, as well as a coachman on the Oxford road. He says:

'My employer, knowing that Oxford was a place where harness-horses were sometimes to be picked up on more reasonable terms than in London, had com-

missioned me to look out, and, as occasion might offer, purchase some for him. This I had done to his satisfaction.

'One afternoon a tout, or man who was a sort of horse-dealer's cad, came and told me, as a great favour, of a horse that was to be disposed of for a little money. I went with him, and was shown a very useful sort of coach-horse. I asked to see him out. This was complied with, and running my eye over him, and approving his action, I said:

'"Sound?"

'"Perfectly; but I don't warrant him."

'"Age?"

'"Six years old."

'Looking in his mouth I found this to be correct.

'"Price?" I said.

'"Ten pounds," was the reply.

'I immediately concluded something was wrong, as he looked like a five-and-thirty-pound horse.

'"He's not a kicker?" I said.

'"You can't make him kick," was the reply.

'I was almost ashamed to say, "You don't warrant him quiet, I suppose?"

'"You can't expect it at that price; but all I have told you is true."

'"Then I'll have him," I said.

'I observed a smile on the lips of the stableman as

I followed him into the house to give him the money, when the seller candidly told me he had given thirty pounds for the horse, and had sold him two or three times for more money; but he had always been returned, as he would not go in harness. Not very well satisfied with my bargain, I walked away, desiring him to send the horse round to the Roebuck.

'Early next morning I borrowed a break, harnessed him, and put him to with another horse; but he would not move, and when touched with the whip he reared right on end, then threw himself down, and there he lay. At this I thought it was a bad case, when my friend, who had kindly put me up to this great bargain, called to me, and said:

'"Master, master! light a truss of straw and put under him!"

'Nothing loth to make trial of such a remedy, which I had heard of before, though I had never seen it practised, and there being few people about, for it was early in the morning, we unbuckled his traces, got him out, and with the other horse drew the break into the corn-market, and put him to again, for I was not to be beaten without a further trial. My friend then procured me a wisp of straw, and strewed it on the ground under the horse, and when I was ready set fire to it. The animal made two or

three plunges clear of the straw, and then threw himself down.

'Satisfied now that he might be made to go, though not by such means, I thought I would try another element, which I had before seen applied with success. After getting him up I had him taken to the canal, where I found a barge just going to start with two horses. Giving the bargeman half-a-crown to lend me some draught-harness, with his permission we put my horse in behind the other two, first taking the precaution to have the barge moored off the quay and clear of other craft. We then moved on, when the brute threw himself about, first up in the air, then down on his knees; up again, then forward, then back on his haunches. But the two fore-horses went on, and, their traces acting upon the barge, did not give him time to lie down; and after two or three attempts to baffle us, he rolled off the towing-path into the canal.

'Here, after two or three plunges, and being immersed in water, the tackle holding good, he regained his feet and the towing-path at the same time; and the other two horses keeping their places and their pace, and the barge being in motion, there was nothing left for him but to keep quietly on or put up with another ducking. He chose the former, walked up to his collar, and took his share of draught for about two

miles without the least attempt at jibbing. We then took him out and returned to the Roebuck. The coach arriving in about half an hour, I put him in off-wheel, and drove him to Benson, a distance of twelve miles, our first stage, and no horse ever went better or more quietly.

'The next day I drove him back, and the report of this singular feat having spread through the city, all the stable fraternity of Oxford assembled to greet my return, and to assure themselves of the identity of the animal; for it appeared that he had been tried by many of Mr. Costar's men, who had all pronounced him incurable, and he had been returned accordingly, as the man from whom I bought him had told me. I continued to drive him as long as the coach lasted, and it fell to my lot a year or two later to renew my acquaintance with him in another team from the same establishment.'

This is his account of the renewal of the acquaintance, on which occasion there was nearly being a serious accident, in no way, however, attributable to the particular horse mentioned before:

'My first journey to London was attended with rather an inauspicious event. I did not know a yard of the road for the first two stages before the day I took possession of the box of the Lynn coach, but had no difficulty in finding my way, as, with the exception

of diverging from the Royston Road, rather more than four miles from Cambridge, I could not possibly make a mistake, and in taking the right road the horses themselves would, I knew, be sufficient guides. Arrived at the inn which my predecessor had used, I pulled up; and he informed me that he should resume his seat in a day or two, but gave no reason for his strange conduct, or for his leaving without saying anything to his employer. This, of course, did not tend to put me on very good terms with myself.

'After changing for the last time at Waltham Cross it became dark, and I forgot, if I had ever known, the double gate at Kingsland; and the glare of the lamps not permitting me to see that the farther one was closed, my leaders ran against it, and the force of the concussion knocked them on their haunches, and very much discomposed my nerves. The confusion was great, one of the bars being broken, and the leaders partly under the wheel-horses. I got down, and, having plenty of assistance, soon liberated the team, replaced the broken bar with a spare one we always carried, and being pretty well up in knotting and splicing, made the reins right. No further mischief having been done, I proceeded on the journey, but had the greatest difficulty in piloting the team—one of which, a wheel-horse, *I recognised as the animal I had cured of his evil propensities at*

Oxford by my knowledge of hydropathics—through the city, one pulling, another rearing, and all from their excited state being nearly unmanageable. However, at last, much to my relief, I landed them safe in the Golden Cross yard; and those who recollect that yard before it was purchased by Government and pulled down, will understand that this could have been no very easy task.'

Of course, to coach-proprietors working over the middle-ground, if they had no stoppages at their houses for the passengers' meals, but merely their share of the earnings to depend on as the profit arising from their undertaking, economy in the purchase of horses was a most important matter—a good appearance being considered unnecessary for horses which were never seen at work by daylight, as with the mails and night-coaches on certain parts of their journeys. Thus a horse that would be quite up to the mark over a stage in the Bristol or Gloucester mail, would not do to show in the 'York House,' the swell day-coach from Bath, or the 'Berkeley Hunt,' filling a similar position on the Cheltenham road.

So totally different were the day and night horses, that I have fancied sometimes when describing the latter to men who had never seen them, they thought my descriptions were 'travellers' tales' very much

exaggerated, and that such animals never could have existed in fact.

Occasionally there might be an opportunity of somewhat diversifying the monotonous work of the coachmen and guards who travelled night after night for a great part of the year in the dark, especially with the mails, which were supposed to stop only for the time set out in the Post-Office time-bills—and except where they might be obliged to wait a few minutes for Post-Office business, it was change, up and off again. Coming up on Saturday night from the country, arriving at the General Post Office in London on Sunday morning, when there was no delivery of letters, the mails were not bound strictly to the time, as there was no object in having the letter-bags arrive at the Post Office punctually; hence it might happen that a mail or two fell in with some of the coaches, when of course it was considered indispensable that the officials should have something at one of the little roadside public-houses, which were kept open all night, or opened very early in the morning, for the particular coaches which either changed or just pulled up there.

By way of a little diversion one night, a mail on the up journey on the North road changed at the inn kept by one of the proprietors, who slept in a room facing the street, and nearly over the entrance

Sturgess del et sc.

SHE RATTLED AWAY WITH A CONTINUOUS VOLLEY OF [illegible]

to the inn-yard, the doors of which were closed. The proprietor, who had gone to bed, and was asleep long before the mail arrived, was not, for some reason or other, a particular favourite with the coachman, to whom a plan occurred for having a little fun for himself, the guard, and horsekeeper, at the proprietor's expense.

It happened that in the fresh team to be put to, was a grey mare who was an inveterate kicker upon the slightest provocation. The accomplishment, I believe, she had acquired under the teaching of some men who had been in the habit of mounting her bare backed, and, when up, scratching her back with a curry-comb. Thus tutored, it is not to be wondered at that the mare soon became entitled to the character I have given her.

So, in order to turn her talent to account, and at the same time have their amusement, either the coachman or guard backed the mare sharply up against the closed doors, when she rattled off a continuous volley of kicks. This unusual noise in the dead silence of the night woke up the landlord, who immediately rushed out of bed, and throwing up the window, put out his head to ascertain the cause of all the row. To do this did not take long, as he looked down on the mare, who continued her performance.

He at once called on the three spectators, who were enjoying their joke, to get the mare away from the gates; but they professed their unwillingness to go near her, for fear of the consequences. At length, however, she was got away from the doors and put into the mail, and the journey was resumed. The little time, if any, lost by the performance would be made up in some way over the different stages; or in the event of this being impracticable, the guard would have the means of accounting for it on his time-bill, by ascribing it to improper horses being employed, which would at once cause some communication between the Post-Office Inspector and the proprietor, in all probability somewhat to the annoyance and trouble of the latter.

The advertisements of Mr. George Robbins, a noted auctioneer of large estates many years since, used to be productions of the most flowery character, containing glowing and enchanting descriptions of the properties to be disposed of. They were such as are not to be met with in the advertisements of the most zealous auctioneers of the present day.

There are, however, to be found in the current announcements of things to be sold, descriptions perhaps more curious than accurate, as appears by extracts I have made from various papers.

In the equine department, for instance, it would

seem that almost everyone wishing to dispose of a horse considers it necessary, not only to describe all particulars connected with the animal in question, but also to give a satisfactory reason for wishing to part with it—which one might suppose quite immaterial to the purchaser, whose only object is to be satisfied that it is what he requires, and worth the money asked for it.

I find in advertisements for the sale of horses, in nearly every case they are stated to be 'the property of a gentleman,' which would lead one to suppose that this adds considerably to their value, although I believe, as a fact, many gentlemen find themselves in possession of horses which are anything but what they expected, and consequently are glad to get rid of at almost any price; while some persons assume the title of gentlemen, although their dealings in horses scarcely warrant the assumption.

Another frequent and favourite statement, after enumerating all the virtues and good qualities that can well be combined in one horse, is that he 'is parted with for no fault,' which sounds rather suspicious, and would seem to be superfluous.

I find some descriptions dubious and obscure as regards the animal to be disposed of, and rather more descriptive of the owner; for instance, 'a perfect lady's hunter' may belong to a perfect

lady, but be the most vicious or useless brute living; whilst 'For sale, dark chesnut mare, hunted by a lady very fast,' is quite open to presumption that the fast lady hunted the chesnut mare round a field; and indeed I find two or three horses advertised as 'having been hunted by a lady.' So that the ladies seem to hunt the horses, an amusement, by-the-bye, which does not appear to be confined to the female sex, as a gentleman advertises some horses which 'have been hunted by the master and servants.'

A very sagacious animal is to be disposed of, showing his good taste and preference for ladies, as he is 'A bay horse exceptionally clever, and *would* carry a lady;' from which I infer that he was of a very resolute temper, and presumably would not carry a gentleman. As the opposite to the fast lady's horse, there is one described as 'A good lady's horse;' the announcement, curiously enough, being silent as to the character of the animal itself.

Singular are the announcements of ponies required for the juvenile members of the community, and the descriptions of animals offered for them; there is 'A perfect child's pony'—'A handsome child's pony for sale;' but there is no mention of whether the 'handsome' or 'perfect' child is a boy or a girl, while the pony may be such as is seen carrying on

its back the hooped sticks and blankets forming a gipsy's tent. 'A capital boy's hunter' and 'A good boy's hunter' may belong to boys who have been singularly exemplary at school, although, in my own opinion and experience, the 'good boy,' as he is often called, is not a very taking or lovable individual. What sort of animal the next one is I think, from the description, it is impossible to tell: 'A pony—would make a capital boy's hunter.' Who is the 'capital boy' thus frequently described I should much like to know, and what it is that entitles him to the character conferred upon him.

I had almost forgotten to mention two most complimentary notices respecting ladies who seem to surpass both the 'very fast' lady and the 'good lady,' as there is 'For sale, a perfect lady's hack,' and 'Very superior ladies' hunters;' but excelling even these are 'Two first-class ladies' hacks.' What a rare collection it would make for a caravan at a fair, if all these persons could be exhibited! Fancy the showman at the top of the stairs leading into the caravan, after the gong had sounded, shouting out, 'Walk inside, ladies and gentlemen, and see "the fast lady," "the good lady," 'the perfect lady," "the handsome child," "the capital boy," "the very superior lady," and "the two first-class ladies"! All for the small charge of one penny!' If these would not draw, the next

announcement, which beats all the others hollow, could not possibly fail—'Required a perfect pony for little girl 13.2 in height; about seven years old.' I do not feel equal to commenting on this extraordinary child, having never seen or heard of anything like her.

The reasons which owners assign for parting with their horses are numerous and curious, as will be seen from those which follow; but perhaps about the most candid and unanswerable is, 'Lady's horse for sale, cheap, as the owner is unable to ride;' 'the property of a gentleman who is retiring to—,' 'who is giving up hunting,' 'the owner going abroad,' 'who is not going to hunt next season,' 'who is breaking up his establishment,' 'owing to the death of the owner,' 'who is unable to hunt next season,' etc., etc., *quos nunc præscribere longum est.* Why it is necessary that the purchasers should be made acquainted in all these instances with the sellers' affairs I do not, as I have before observed, understand; but it seems to be the correct thing to do, judging from the numerous instances in which it occurs.

One person has 'Two horses, both movers in harness,' to dispose of. I suppose they would not be much use in harness if they didn't move; but the rate at which they will move is cleverly omitted. Another person has for disposal 'A dark-brown nobleman's

riding cob;' but he does not say whether the nobleman is a mulatto or half-caste, or what advantage is to be derived from purchasing a cob belonging to 'a dark-brown nobleman.'

Singularity in advertisements does not seem to be confined to those who buy or sell horses, as a man advertises for a place 'As valet; understands hunting and shooting things,' but does not specify what things; it may be hunting rats or shooting stars.

For those wishing to get out of town during the summer, there are 'Rooms to let, at a prettily situated gentleman's residence;' but it does not mention where the gentleman is 'prettily situated.' Mr. Pickwick was prettily situated when discovered with Mrs. Bardell in his arms.

In the present period of agricultural depression, it may be useful to farmers giving up their farms, to learn that there is a 'Farm wanted with a small gentleman's house;' but the size of the 'small gentleman' is not mentioned, or his name, so that it may be General Tom Thumb or Commodore Nutt. Neither does the reason for stating that the gentleman is small appear; perhaps it has some reference to the rent he intends to pay.

One would suppose that in travelling by a steamer, all passengers paying the same fare would be entitled

to equal privileges and advantages, like railway passengers, and that no distinction would be made between ladies who are handsome and those who unfortunately may be the reverse. This, however, is not the case, as the advertisement of the Calais-Douvres steamer announces that there are 'Handsome ladies' cabins;' but no mention is made of any cabins being provided for the poor ladies who may not happen to be handsome.

I gather from the various advertisements I have collected, that a study of Lindley Murray might probably conduce to a more lucid expression of the advertisers' meanings; and those respecting horses seem not to have put the horse before the cart, but rather to have put the owner before the horse, and described the former instead of the latter.

To these remarks on purchasing horses by advertisement I would add a few words respecting private purchase.

I heard it said many years since, but where, or by whom, I cannot now remember, that there were three things a man should never lend—his wife, his horse, or his razor.

To anyone contemplating any such loan, I would say, in the words of *Punch* to persons about to marry—'Don't.' The same advice, I think, would also be applicable to anyone about to purchase a

horse from a friend. The reason why I think so I will now state.

A. having several horses, all well driven or ridden, sufficiently worked to preclude any probability of their kicking over the traces, always properly harnessed, put to in suitable carriages, and not overfed, does not meet with any accidents, or find his horses exhibit any ebullitions of temper consequent upon a want of proper management.

B., his friend, being in want of a horse for harness-work, but understanding little about horses, deputes his groom to negotiate as to the purchase of one from A., which, after some two or three little talks on the subject between the grooms of both gentlemen, and an interview between the latter, is effected; A. dealing fairly and candidly as with a gentleman.

Upon such occasions the grooms invariably, I believe, look for a gratuity from the purchaser and seller crosswise. I will suppose that A. gives B.'s servant a liberal douceur, and now let us see what the effect is. The horse turns out, say, satisfactorily in every respect, and having gone on very well, the purchaser's servant begins to think that, as he got such a good thing out of the purchase, it is about time that he should renew the process, and he sets his wits to work as to the mode of accomplishing his object. To suggest any objection to the horse is an

awkward matter, but it may be done in this way, perhaps :

'This horse is too good for our work, and if we keep him, some day we may have an accident with him; it is as much as I can do to hold him sometimes, when I am out with the carriage, driving the missus and the children. He can be sold now as quiet in harness, and without fault; but if kept till he runs away, or kicks the carriage to pieces, he will sell for next to nothing. Mr. A., I know, has a nice little horse now, just suited to our work; and his price is not high—I chanced to hear from his groom the other day what it would be.'

Upon this B. calls on his friend, expressing his satisfaction in every respect as to his horse and the previous deal; mentions that he understands from his groom that he has another horse for sale, which will be better adapted to his requirements, and accordingly purchases No. 2.

On this occasion, suppose A. does not come down with a liberal douceur as on the previous one, much to the disappointment of B.'s groom, who has, however, probably got something from a purchaser of his master's horse. Being annoyed at what he considers want of gentlemanlike conduct, and disappointed of his anticipated benefit from the transaction, B.'s groom looks upon A. as a person from

whom nothing more can be got in future, and hence determines to look about for some other source whence he can get money from a change of his master's horse.

The course adopted will probably be this. After a time has elapsed, sufficiently long not to raise suspicion, some fault is discovered in horse No. 2 : either 'He went a little lame when he was out in the carriage the other day, and I understand the veterinary surgeon, who knows all about him, told some one that he had fever in the feet, and was constantly lame;' or, 'Several times when I have been driving to the station to meet you or missus' (the carriage of course was always empty), 'he has shied and very nearly had me into the ditch. I'm almost afraid to drive him;' or, 'He is a very delicate horse; there is always something the matter with him, and we shall be obliged to have the vet. to him before long. I don't think he'll ever be well long together; perhaps we'd better get rid of him before he gets worse.' And by way of preventing his master from resorting to his friend Mr. A. for another horse, the groom hints that the state of his constitution must have been known to that gentleman, which was the reason, no doubt, of his letting his master have him at such a low figure. The fact probably being that A. had sold the horse at a low figure because he was dealing with his friend.

The horse is consequently disposed of to somebody, poor B. not for a moment suspecting that the objections raised by his groom were entirely fabricated on his part, in order to have another fee from the purchaser, to whom he does not fail to laud the horse up to the skies in the most candid manner, giving his true character, which thus secures a liberal douceur again.

B., however, feeling somewhat chagrined at what he supposes to be an advantage taken by A. of his want of equine knowledge, gently discloses part of the information received from his groom, suppressing, however, the hint that A. must have known of the state of the horse's constitution.

A feeling of annoyance is caused on both sides, with a mutual tacit resolution not to have any further dealing; and B. carries out this resolution by procuring another horse without resorting to his friend. This further increases the coolness between them, and they cease to be on the former good terms.

That such occurrences are by no means unfrequent, I am perfectly well aware; and this fact will, I think, sufficiently show the prudence of the advice with which I set out—'Don't.'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE POST OFFICE.

The procession of mail-coaches was to be seen only once a year; but the nearest approach to it was the departure of the mails from the General Post Office, St. Martin's le Grand, every night (except Sunday) at eight o'clock. The coaches leaving London nightly never exceeded twenty-eight, but had gradually risen to that number as additional mails had from time to time been put on the various roads, either at the suggestion of coach-proprietors who thought a fresh one could be successfully worked, or by the direction of the Postmaster-General, who had found that the proposed road comprised places insufficiently provided with postal accommodation, or who might have been memorialized by the inhabitants to put a mail-coach on the road.

It having been decided to start one, the course then adopted was for a Post-Office official—either a superintendent and surveyor of mail-coaches or an inspector—to go down the road, putting himself in

communication with the coach-proprietors on it, to ascertain whether they were disposed to join in horsing it. If it was to run out of London, a meeting of the proprietors might be held there with some London proprietors having influence or business connections along the proposed road, and thus probably able to bring custom to the new concern. If a large London coach-proprietor could be got at one end, and the principal one in the town at the other end, there would not be much difficulty in their finding middle-ground men to undertake that part, and they would be more likely to accomplish this easily than the Post-Office official, who did not find it all smooth work when trying to establish a new mail, as appeared from a report made by Mr. Akers, for forty years one of the six inspectors of mail-coaches; he said:

'After this long experience I found latterly increased difficulty in obtaining contracts for the mails, in fact so much so that men would form all sorts of excuses rather than come to the point; they would say: "I will see you again in half an hour," and would perhaps go off to the next market town. . . . I have been down to Cambridge last week, and called on three men there. One said: "I will see you again in an hour's time." I replied, "I wish to be off in an hour's time. I cannot finish this contract in a month if I go on so. I have to account for my time."

"Then I will see you again in half an hour." I went back to the inn, for I had a person to see there. He said: "I will tell you what, Mr. Akers, it is not any use humbugging you"—that was the very term he used—"we do not mean to sign any contract at all." I thanked him for his candid answer, and went and called on the other person, and he said he had not quite made up his mind as to distance. If Mr. Hall of Ely did not choose to give him a quarter of a mile in the earnings more than the distance, he could not think of joining. They put us off in that way.'

Such is a sample of the obstacles Mr. Akers used to meet with in the course of his official duties.

The proprietors' objection to sign any contract might have arisen from the formidable appearance of one of the contract forms in use by the Postmaster-General, if they had chanced to see one.

They were printed on strong sheets of paper, no less than a yard long—or to be accurate to an inch, two feet nine inches long, by one foot ten inches broad; and being all exactly the same, when required for use the Post-Office official had merely to fill in the places between which the mail ran, and the rate of payment. All the other particulars were specified in the time-bills which were annexed, and were in the form set out elsewhere.

Mr. Akers evidently did not ascribe the proprietors' objection to sign a contract to its appearance, as when asked how he accounted for the increased difficulty of obtaining contractors in later years, he said :

'I think the competition is greater, from the number of persons who are working different coaches, and that therefore they do not find it worth their while. For instance, many of the middle proprietors are drivers who cannot conveniently belong to a mail-coach, as there are strong objections to them. If a man works one side of the coach, if he finds five horses, that gives him a situation. A number of those little proprietors cover a great scope of country, and I know Mr. Chaplin of Lad Lane has many of those subworkers who are driving the post-coaches, and they are getting into that with the mails where they can ; but the office is not fond of it—it is an incorrect way.'

Mr. Akers sometimes found the proprietors as troublesome to manage as getting an unwilling horse up to the pole. 'Even when we go down to get the contract executed by those persons, the thing having been pretty well understood by many of them before, when we come to the point they hesitate and evade it.' In fact, like many of the horses which they worked in their coaches, they jibbed.

They say : 'This mail-coach can only carry four

inside and three out; if the coach is to travel two or three days in the week with only two, it reduces the earnings so that they are not worth our notice. Besides, the hours in the mail-coach business are generally very awkward; the coaches leave London in the evening, and the same returning. The hundred miles from London is sure to be night-work during the winter.' Or: 'If we had an opportunity of carrying one more, what a help it would be to us, if only for two or three days a week!'

On the other hand, there was the difficulty of the extra luggage of the additional passenger to be met, there being little room under any circumstances for passengers' luggage on the mails. The guard monopolized the whole of the hind-boot for his letter-bags, and also put some large sacks up on the top when the boot was not large enough to take all his Post-Office packages. A considerable part of the front-boot was wanted by the coachman for his parcels, which, although not very large, from the number of them necessarily occupied a good deal of room; thus the available space for a small portmanteau only for each passenger was pretty well absorbed, and it frequently happened when the mails were being loaded in the General Post-Office yard at St. Martin's le Grand, with only the luggage of the four inside and three outside passengers, they had a good deal of

trouble ; the passengers had to be told they must take off their heavy things, and must be contented to go with something less. And when a gentleman's luggage was taken off, 'many severe observations,' as I have before stated, were made ; and the proprietors being allowed to carry an additional passenger would no doubt have added very much both to the number and strength of the severe observations. It would also have been necessary to alter the roof-seat of the mail, so as to make room for another person.

As the mails filed off out of the Post-Office yard at night, judging from the height of the load on the roof it certainly did not seem that any addition could with safety be made to it.

How different a state of things is this from that mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, who said a friend of his remembered the letter-bag arriving in Edinburgh during the year 1745 with but one letter in it, and about the same time the same mail arrived in London with but one letter. The mode of conveying the letters at that time must have been by horse-post, as the first mail-coach from London to Bristol was not started until 1784.

As the mails became established on the principal main roads out of London, and from a variety of other circumstances, correspondence and newspapers very much increased ; and thus in nearly a century after

the time mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, there was such an accumulation of both letters and papers on Saturday and Monday nights, that the Post Office found it extremely difficult to get the Edinburgh mail off at the proper time, and was obliged to take two outside passengers off it for the purpose of devoting the whole roof to the carrying of the bags, and also to pay the proprietors for two places to York every Saturday night. While in order to relieve the Holyhead mail, which in like manner was too heavily loaded on those nights, part of the Post-Office packages—a very large sack—was sent on early in the evening by the 'Greyhound' Birmingham night-coach, the proprietors charging the Post Office the fare of one outside passenger for the carriage of it.

The reason of the extra pressure on the Post Office on the Saturday and Monday nights was that there was not any post out of London on Sunday night, so that all letters which it was desired that country correspondents should receive on the Monday morning were obliged to be posted in time for the mail out of London on Saturday night; while the accumulation on Monday night arose from the letters which had arrived from the country on Sunday morning in London, and had to be passed on together with the ordinary Monday's correspondence, increased

from there having been no post out of London on the previous day.

I dare say many persons will scarcely suppose that less than fifty years since it occupied a period of five days, or if a Sunday intervened, six, for a letter to be sent and the answer received between two persons on the opposite sides of London, but not forty miles distant from each other. Such, however, was the case; and in order to show how it arose, I will illustrate my case, and prove the veracity of my assertions.

I will take A., living at St. Albans, twenty-one miles on the north side of London, writing to B., resident at Brentwood, eighteen from it, making a distance of thirty-nine miles only between them. The same thing would apply to the distance from Brentwood to Slough—only thirty-eight miles. I will take the year 1836, being before any part of the London and Birmingham railway was opened and carried the mails, when letters travelled the whole distance by the road mail-coaches; thus the period to which I refer is only forty-eight years since. Both St. Albans and Brentwood being beyond the radius of the twopenny posts, and there being no day-mail to either of them, they had but one delivery a day, and all their letters and papers were conveyed by the long mails.

A., then, posts his letter for B. at nine o'clock on Monday morning in the St. Albans Post Office, where it reposes in a state of quietude until about four o'clock on Tuesday morning, when the Holyhead, or one of the North mails, takes it up to St. Martin's le Grand, whether it further remains in a state of rest until eight o'clock that night, when the Norwich mail takes it down to Brentwood, which it reaches about ten o'clock at night, and is delivered to B. on the Wednesday morning. In order not to lose any time, and perhaps not being perfectly acquainted with all the minutiæ of Post-Office arrangements, B. posts his reply on Wednesday morning at ten o'clock. It remains, however, in the Brentwood Post-Office until the Norwich mail, coming up about four o'clock on Thursday morning, conveys it, after a rest of about eighteen hours, to the General Post Office, which it reaches about six o'clock.

A further period of repose here ensues, as the letter lies at St. Martin's le Grand until eight o'clock on the Thursday evening, when one of the North-country mails, going through St. Albans, will drop it there a little after ten, when, after a quiet night's rest in St. Albans Post Office, it is delivered there to A. between eight and nine o'clock on Friday morning, being the fifth day after the correspondence had commenced. Had it happened, however, to begin

two or three days later, so that the Sunday would have intervened, and B.'s reply reached London on the Sunday morning, the letter would have remained at the General Post Office till eight o'clock on Monday night, a period of thirty-six hours ; this shows how the increase of correspondence out of London occurred on Monday nights.

A great deal of consideration was given at the Post Office as to the means of sending correspondence by the day-coaches out of London ; but it did not appear that there would be much benefit derived from the plan, except to places not more than fifty or sixty miles distant from London, when a letter posted at ten in the morning might be delivered the same evening in time to post a reply, which would reach London the next morning. There was an objection to making use of the coaches as mails, independently of the additional expense which would have been incurred for a few letters only, as a guard would have to be carried together with the bags, and the coach-proprietors paid for the accommodation thus afforded.

It was probably experimentally that the Brighton and Dover day-mails were started, arriving at the General Post Office between four and five, so that letters received at those places early in the morning, if answered immediately, would be delivered in London the same evening.

These were the only two places to which day-mails out of London were established, perhaps they were considered the only two places sufficiently important within an available distance from London ; and there was also the prospect of the railways partially opening and becoming of service in carrying mails out of London in the morning, rendering the establishment of other day-mails unnecessary.

When this opportunity arose, it was still found necessary to send a guard with the bags, for the same reason that was alleged by the Post Office with regard to the coaches, as it was said that the guard or coachman of a stage-coach was principally concerned about the passengers and luggage ; but on a mail the guard was their own servant, and had a specific duty to attend to, whereas on a stage-coach the letter-bag would be the last thing the guard would think of.

Before the railways out of London actually opened, and were taken into the service of the Post Office, that is to say in 1836, a gentleman holding a high position in the General Post Office, speaking as to the anticipated facilities of forwarding the mails by rail-road, said it would entirely depend upon a point which had not been ascertained, viz., whether rail-roads could be travelled on by night. He thought it might be accomplished by gas-lights and strong lights for short distances, but it was very questionable

whether such a system could be made available for long distances. This is rather in accordance with the opinions expressed as to the travelling at night both on the Leeds and Selby and Manchester and Liverpool lines in the days of their infancy.

As it was a convenient arrangement that all the correspondence out of London should leave the General Post Office at eight o'clock at night, an hour when all the business of the day was finished, so it was found also convenient that it should all arrive at much about the same time, and at an early hour in the morning, for the general post delivery.

The departure from London took place in this manner; all the mails travelling northward, such as—

The Edinburgh,	The Hull,
„ Glasgow,	„ Leeds,
„ Halifax,	„ Liverpool,
„ Holyhead,	„ Manchester,

and some others, went out at the northern gate of the Post-Office yard, opposite the Bull and Mouth; and seven of them, which passed through Barnet, went up Aldersgate Street; but the Edinburgh went down Old Street and out of London through Shoreditch, Tottenham, and on to Waltham Cross.

The mails running south and eastward went out at the gate next Cheapside, and comprised—

The Dover,	The Lynn,
„ Norwich and Ipswich,	„ Louth,
„ Norwich and Newmarket,	

and the Brighton and Hastings—both pair-horse mails. With all the above, their loading was complete when the guards got their bags up in the General Post-Office yard, and they were then turned away at once; but with the western mails, eleven in number, the arrangements were different. The guards got off as soon as they could pack all the bags into the carts which conveyed them up to the West End, where the mail-coaches had preceded them.

Those for Piccadilly were—

The Bath,
„ Bristol,
„ Devonport,
„ Exeter,

The Gloucester,
„ Southampton,
„ Stroud,
„ Portsmouth.

Of these, all but the Portsmouth went through Hounslow, where they diverged, some going on the Staines Road, and others on the Bath—the Portsmouth going through Kingston and Guildford.

The other two western mails were the Worcester and the Birmingham, *viâ* Banbury; but they went from the Gloucester Coffee House, or Green Man and Still in Oxford Street, where the carts carried up their guards with the letter-bags.

Having explained how all the mails were got away out of London, I will now mention the plan of their arrivals, timed, as I have said, so as to effect a general post-office delivery throughout London early in the morning.

The arrivals of the mails, or in the case of the western ones the mail-carts, at St. Martin's le Grand were :

	H.	M.
Exeter	6	30
Leeds	4	5
Glasgow	5	15
Edinburgh	5	39
Halifax	5	45
Liverpool	6	0
Chester	6	0
Manchester	6	5
Devonport	6	49
Holyhead	6	54
Bristol	6	45
Portsmouth	6	40

All the others were timed to arrive before seven o'clock, so that the sorting could commence, or rather be completed, and the delivery take place without delay. As no sorting could take place on the road, and it was indispensable that it should be completed before the letter-carriers could be despatched on their several rounds, punctuality in the arrival of the mails was the very essence of the system, and the failure of one or more to reach their destination would have disorganized the whole machinery. The importance of this it was, probably, that led to the great and almost unvarying punctuality of the mails, which was conducted with such exactitude that the arrival of the mail at any particular place on its route was

taken as an infallible test of time, and a means by which you could set your watch or clock.

Such was the mode in which the postal business of the country was conducted and the admirable way in which it worked up to the time when the railways stepped in and swept it all away, so far as the mode of conveyance was concerned.

The mail-coach era commenced in the year 1784 with the London and Bristol, and terminated gradually—the mails being partially or wholly taken off, as the railways were opened and became available. Probably by the year 1844 there was not any mail running on the road out of London. In 1839 the Bath, Bristol, Gloucester and Stroud mails were all put on the Great Western Railway ; at a later period the Devonport, Southampton, and Portsmouth went by the South Western, the terminus of which was then at Nine Elms. In the same year all the northern mails were off the road, Chaplin and Horne having thrown their interest into the North-Western Railway Company.

Shortly after the establishment of the first mail-coach to Bristol, a medal, rather larger than the present halfpenny, was struck, having on each side a mail-coach and horses; on one side was this inscription underneath the horses: 'To trade expedition. To property protection.' On the other: 'To

J. Palmer, Esq., this is inscribed as a token of gratitude for benefits received from the establishment of mail-coaches.—J. F.'

The medal I saw was very much worn, and did not, so far as I could discern, bear any date; neither was there anything upon it to indicate to whom the initials 'J. F.' referred, but not improbably to some mercantile man in an extensive way of business, who had experienced the benefit of the security and expedition of the mail-coach system, if not on the Bristol, on one or other of the several roads on which mail-coaches were put, in some instances at the earnest solicitation of the residents in towns along the main roads, when the benefits to be derived from them were manifest from the success of the Bristol mail.

I have mentioned how a letter arriving in London on Sunday morning would be delayed in transit in consequence of there being no mail out of London on Sunday night.

This detention was a matter which received much consideration at the Post Office, and great anxiety was felt to remedy the inconvenience without inflicting upon the Post-Office clerks the necessity of attendance on Sunday.

One plan suggested was, that at the end of every line of road nearest London a post should be despatched, making a sort of circle round London;

starting for instance from Romford, and going as far as Hounslow, passing through Epping, Waltham Cross, Barnet, Edgware and Southall. A post also was to start from Shooter's Hill through Bromley, Croydon and Kingston to Hounslow; then an interchange of letters was to take place, and the posts were to return to the places from whence they started.

Thus letters would avoid being passed through London. But while the clerks at the General Post Office were relieved by this scheme from attendance there on Sunday, the unfortunate clerks in the country would have had a very considerable addition to their work on that day. The plan, however—much, I presume, to the delight of the rural officials of that day—was not adopted. Even with the very limited amount of correspondence at that time, 1836, it was calculated that an acceleration of twenty-four hours would be given to 3,500 letters. No doubt this number would have been considerably added to after the acceleration had taken place.

The vast increase in the number of letters, and the different modes necessarily adopted in the management of the Post-Office business, would perhaps render it impossible at the present time to adopt any scheme like the one suggested.

That the legislature had not been oblivious of the Post-Office department, is manifest from the circum-

stance that in 1836 there were not less than 141 Acts of Parliament, some wholly and others partially existing, affecting the Post Office, commencing with one passed in the reign of Queen Anne, the subject being the Duke of Marlborough's pension out of the Post-Office revenue.

With a view to consolidating all these Acts, Mr. Peacock, the solicitor to the Post Office, prepared four bills, the object of one being to repeal all the existing Acts, and another to provide for the general management and regulation of the Post Office.

While on the subject of the Post Office, a few remarks as to the scope and nature of the duties attached to it at the time just referred to, and at the present day, may not be out of place.

When the mails were on the road, the work of the Post Office was confined strictly to the conveyance of letters and papers, but it is now extended to the Savings Bank, life insurances, granting annuities, the telegraphic business, and the parcel-post.

As regards the latter department, the project of a parcel-post conducted by the Post Office was mooted as long back as 1836; and a gentleman, having in the course of his business to receive and despatch many parcels, gave it as his opinion that if the Post Office took parcels at a fair rate, it would be a great convenience to the public, and would add

largely to the revenue of the Post Office, because the public would consider it the surest conveyance, and be willing, therefore, to pay more for it than they did to the proprietors of coaches; in short, that the parcel-post would always be preferred. But you could not, in the then existing state of things, send a small valuable parcel by the mail from any post-office. He also thought that no person would object to pay a high rate of insurance to be certain of the safe transmission of a valuable parcel by the mail.

The establishment of a parcel-post with the old mails would have been impracticable, and its proposer must have been unacquainted with the difficulty there was in finding room in the mail-coaches for all the letters and papers only, without any addition in the way of parcels, for the conveyance of which the coachman had barely room in the limited space in the front-boot, which was partly occupied with the passengers' luggage.

It is now, as I have shown, nearly fifty years since this idea of having a parcel-post in connection with the Post Office was mooted, and at that time the rate of postage was in proportion to the distance a letter had to travel, and also whether it was single or double. But even with the rate of postage high as it then was, according to the statement of an

extensive London coach-proprietor, it was cheaper to send a letter by the post than forwarded as a small parcel by coach. The charge for a parcel to Brighton, for instance, was a shilling, and no parcel by coach was charged less than that sum, while by post the charge for a letter was only eightpence; but by coach the parcel would cost one shilling and fourpence, including delivery, making a difference of exactly one-half the expense in the two modes of conveyance. In longer distances the coaches had no chance of carrying parcels containing letters, the difference being even greater. As no parcel from London to Manchester or Liverpool would be less than two shillings by the coach, the only instances in which small parcels, perhaps containing a letter only, were likely to be sent by the coaches would be when time was an object, the mails leaving London only once in every twenty-four hours; so in the event of its being important to send a letter immediately, it might be done by means of one of the day-coaches. But this would only be applicable to parcels going distances not exceeding sixty or seventy miles, to places for which day-coaches started after ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. All day-coaches going a hundred miles would leave London at seven or eight o'clock in the morning, before the day's business had commenced or the letters arriving in

London by the mail in the morning had been delivered.

No place like the large manufacturing towns, Birmingham, Liverpool or Manchester, being within the limited distance, would stand much in need of the expeditious delivery of a vast amount of business correspondence, and hence perhaps the subject of parcel-posts remained dormant for so many years.

In the interval, however, various great and important changes have taken place in the Post-Office department. In 1840 the penny postage was established, and the Government Life Insurance and Savings Banks were undertaken by the Post Office in 1860, the Post-Office Order department being of much older date, originating as far back as the year 1792 ; but vast improvements have taken place, and the utility of the system has naturally very much increased in various ways since that time.

Another great benefit connected with the postal department should not be passed over, viz., the transmission of dividend warrants by post.

All persons who are so fortunate as to have a large amount payable to them in dividends on stock, may not know what facilities exist for receiving them without the necessity of a journey to the Bank of England, or giving some one a power of attorney.

In the hope that some ladies may find it of service to them, I will point out the course they should adopt in order to avail themselves of the Post-Office system.

Any holders of stock in the public funds, residing within the United Kingdom, may have their dividend warrants sent to their addresses, by post, on filling up and sending to the Chief Accountant of the Bank of England a form of application, which may be obtained at the Bank of England, or at any of its branches, or at any money-order office; and all such applications for the transmission of warrants should be lodged at the Bank for the several quarters before the 1st of December, the 1st of March, the 1st of June, and 1st of September.

With the substitution of railways as the postal conveyance in lieu of the road-mails, practically unlimited space was at the command of the Post-Office authorities in the railway mail-vans, and thus they were able to carry the immensely increased correspondence consequent upon the introduction of the penny post.

The speed, also, of the railways entirely changed the relative position of London and the country towns, so far as related to distance; places 100 miles from town, and which could only be reached by coach in little less than twelve hours, could, by rail, be reached in three or four: hence the establishment of day-mails from London to places thus situate, as also

many others at greater distances, which now have two or more deliveries of letters from London in the course of the day.

I do not know exactly how the hours of receipt and despatch of letters may be arranged, but it is quite clear that, as regards the time required, a letter might be posted in London in the morning, addressed to a person in a town 100 miles distant, and a reply received the same evening. This is somewhat more expeditious than the instance I have mentioned of a letter and the reply requiring a period of five or six days for their respective journeys by the road-mail.

I daresay some of the old road-mail guards are acting in the same capacity on the railways; and if so, they will no doubt have contrasted the difference between the modes of delivering and taking up the letter-bags at the post-offices in the different towns and villages on their route when with the mail-coach, and the method in which that duty is now accomplished; with little to be done on their parts, but with an ingenious piece of machinery attached to the mail-van and to various posts along the line of railway, by which the letter-bags are dropped or taken up in the dead of the night, while the train is travelling at a rate of thirty or forty miles an hour, or more.

Among other things which were seen only by

persons travelling on mails at night were the postmasters, or in some instances the postmistresses, where the office was kept by a woman, exchanging letter-bags with the guard.

There was no clever piece of machinery then existing by which the bags going away from the post-office could be suspended in such a position that the guard might catch hold of them as the mail drove by, and at the same time deposit those he had to leave.

On a mail at night, if you were entering a long street or village, and the guard began to blow his horn, there being nothing in the road, and the horses having been changed only a short time before, you at once supposed that you were about to arrive at the village post-office, any doubt upon the subject being shortly afterwards solved by the coachman pulling up at a small house, or it might be the general shop of the village, on the wall or window of which, beneath the usual slit or aperture made for such purposes, you could just discern, either by the light of the moon or the lamps of the mail, the words 'Letter-box.' By the time the mail pulled up, an upper window (if in a very rural locality probably a casement) would be opened, and a ghost-like figure in a white head-covering would appear, handing down, by means of a cord with a hook at the end, one or more leather

bags to be dropped somewhere down the road, the name of the place being printed on a small brass label attached to the bag; the guard below was ready to take them in exchange for any he might have to leave, and which he accordingly put on the hook to be drawn up into the bedroom of the post-office official, who was then at liberty to return to bed until the arrival of the other up or down mail, as the case might be, when the same process had to be repeated.

There used to be a story that some years before the railways were made, and in the days when a blue coat with metal buttons, buckskins, and top-boots was a very common dress in the country, an old man who had been a village postmaster for a good many years, and who used in his absence to leave the management of the office to his wife, very often induced her to get up and deliver the bags to the mail-guard.

Probably she had only a rushlight, or small tallow dip in the room, giving scarcely light enough to distinguish anything, and hence she made the mistake of attaching the buckskins instead of the leather letter-bags to the cord and handing them down to the guard. It was more than his place was worth to take them on and deliver them at the Post Office by daylight instead of the letter-bags, so he was obliged

to tell the old dame of her blunder, and get her to hand down the genuine articles.

When the story became bruited about, which of course was very soon, the old people got considerably joked about it, and being probably unable to face the guard or coachman again, she afterwards always left it to her husband to exchange the bags.

That process did not take the guard long when they were handed down correctly, and he was soon up and off again, but occasionally an observation would be addressed to the village post-office official, which, if not sufficiently uncomplimentary to disturb the night's rest of that individual, would sometimes draw forth a reply not expressive of the most tranquil frame of mind. I should imagine that getting out of bed in the middle of the night, being previously startled in your sleep by the sound of the horn, was not even in the height of summer particularly pleasant, or calculated to put one in a good humour, or in a mood to stand any chaff from passengers on the mail.

The mistake made by the postmaster's wife shows how difficulties sometimes arose in distinguishing one thing from another while travelling on a dark night. The same difficulties would appear to exist also with respect to distinguishing places under the same aspect, as appears from a conversation between two young

Hanhart imp

RURAL POST OFFICE.

men, the one at college, and of a studious turn of mind, the other quite the reverse, and very fond of anything connected with horses or coaches. The studious individual inquiring of his companion if he knew algebra, the horsy one, not wishing to admit that there was a place on the road with which he was unacquainted, replied that he thought he had been through it one night outside a coach, but it was so dark he could not see much of it.

Somewhat similar must have been the position of a guard on a night-coach up from Birmingham, with respect to the parcels in the hind-boot when some one stole his lamp at Woburn. But it was by no means an unusual thing for the guard of a coach to put out or cover the lamp of his hind-boot when the opposition was known to be not far behind, so that the coachman following could not tell whether he might not be miles ahead, and would not put on an extra spurt to catch him up.

I have heard of a large bough being attached to the back of a coach in the daytime, and trailed along the ground in the dust to smother the passengers on the coach following; for the truth of the story I don't vouch, but will say in the words of Sam Weller, 'Far from it, on the contrary, quite the reverse.'

As the penny post was established in 1840, and some of the railways out of London did not open any

part of their lines until a year or two after that time, and none of them were completed for a continuous length of more than 100 miles for some time later, there must have been a difficulty in transmitting all the correspondence by the road mails. Although the quantity of letters greatly and rapidly increased under the reduced postage, it had not reached the numbers attained shortly afterwards, and which, I presume, have continued to increase annually since its original introduction.

It is rather curious that, on undertaking the parcel-post business, the Post Office have had to resort to the road again. We do not certainly see the old four-horse mail going along the road with the front-boot nearly full of parcels, but we see the Post-Office vans, with a pair of horses carrying them, much I presume, to the detriment of the general carriers or companies in that line of business.

That the parcel-post must have very materially affected the parcel-traffic by railway companies and parcel-carriers, there can be no doubt; and in anticipation of its introduction, and with a view to securing as much of the trade as possible, they issued a table, setting out very reduced rates for carriage, but still not so low as those of the parcel-post.

The railways still adhered partially to the plan of charging according to distance, while the Post

Office adopted the plan of making weight the sole regulation of the price to be charged, commencing with threepence for a parcel not exceeding three pounds, and terminating with a shilling for seven pounds, the greatest weight carried.

Thus it will be observed that the difference which I have pointed out between the old parcel-conveyance by coach and the parcel-post is very considerable, no parcel under any circumstances going for less than a shilling by the coach, while nothing is charged more than that by the parcel-post.

As the reduced scale of the railways runs up to weights far beyond what the parcel-post will take, and also greatly lowers their charges on parcels not exceeding the weight of seven pounds, there is probably a brisk competition for the business. How far the Post-Office undertaking may be a profitable one, I have not the means of stating, and perhaps sufficient time has not elapsed to form a satisfactory conclusion as to its success.

There is not now so much difference between the railway charges and the parcel-post as there used to be between a letter sent by post and one sent by coach in a parcel; the railways will now carry seven pounds a distance of 400 miles for one shilling and threepence, and the parcel-post will do it for one shilling; the postage of a letter for that distance

used to be about one shilling and twopence, but if sent in a parcel by mail or coach would be more than three shillings and sixpence.

Whether the carriage of parcels by the Post Office —which seems to be a purely commercial matter, and not necessarily adopted in the due conduct of its legitimate province in conveying the correspondence of the kingdom—be financially successful, may, as I have observed, be scarcely ascertainable at present; but it bears somewhat the aspect of assuming a branch of business which could be efficiently carried out with means already existing. That what I may call the enforced reductions made by the railway companies in their charges are most welcome to those who have to pay them, I have no doubt; but one would imagine that private enterprise through the medium of companies or individuals alone would have been equal to accomplishing that object without the intervention of a Government establishment. But while expressing this opinion, I would also observe that the railways have almost a monopoly of the carrying business, and from the readiness with which they seem to have issued their reduced tariff in anticipation of the parcel-post coming into operation, it may be inferred that they had been receiving rates for carriage beyond what would return a reasonable profit after all expenses were discharged.

The last fifty years have been an eventful period in the history of the Post Office; the exclusive field it occupied in the letter department having so vastly increased through the medium of the penny post, it cannot be charged with a want of vitality or progression, and the important additions which have devolved upon the Postmaster-General's office have rendered necessary the erection of the large and commodious building opposite the old Post Office of St. Martin's le Grand.

When only twenty-eight mail-coach loads of bags went out from the Post-Office yard nightly, except on Sundays, at eight o'clock, nothing like the present amount of accommodation was required; but probably one room which was then in use is now appropriated to some other purpose.

It was called the Mail-Guards' Room, and in it all the guards had to assemble every night in order that the inspector on duty in London might see that they were all sober and fit to go on duty, and that they might receive their time-pieces and firearms, consisting of a blunderbuss and brace of pistols, which, so far as I am aware, no one of the guards ever fired off—not even on the memorable occasion when the lioness seized a leader in the Exeter mail on Salisbury Plain, near Winterslow hut. From personal observation of these firearms, I should say that before the

guard could have unfastened the leather cases enclosing their locks, the lioness would have had ample time to seize and carry off the mail leader, and perhaps guard too.

No department of the Government, I should say, has undergone such important alterations, or had such new and extensive duties assigned to it, as the General Post Office.

CHAPTER XIV.

EXPRESSES PAST AND PRESENT.

As it is intended that this book shall in some measure contain useful and authentic records relative to travelling prior to the railway era, a few time-tables of some of the most important mails, such as the London and Edinburgh, the London and Glasgow, and the Holyhead and London, together with those of two or three other mails and some coaches, will be included, in order to give a correct idea of the time occupied in the transit of correspondence from one place to another, and also the time required for ordinary travellers to go from place to place by conveyances less expeditious or punctual than the mail-coaches.

Very curious and different are the meanings attached to the term 'express' as used with respect to travelling now, and rather less than sixty years ago. If a person speaks of sending by, or travelling by, the express, it at once conveys an idea of the rate

of progression being somewhere about fifty miles an hour, as the Great Western will take you from London to Bristol in about two hours and a half; the South Western to Exeter in four hours, and the London and North Western to Edinburgh or Glasgow in nine or ten.

In the year 1827, when the General Post Office was in Lombard Street, any person on applying there could, as a matter of right, be furnished with what was in the phraseology of the period an express for the conveyance, not of himself, but of a letter; it was said that they were very seldom resorted to, but still there they were. The mode of forwarding the letter was by a messenger on horseback; the Post-Office authorities considered the letter ought to be conveyed at the rate of seven miles an hour; the charge was elevenpence a mile. These expresses did not go nearly so fast as a mail, as the following time-bill shows:

TIME BILL OF THE LONDON AND EDINBURGH MAIL.

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed.	London through York to Edinburgh.
	M. F.	H. M.	
			Despatched from the General Post Office, the of , 183 , at 8 P.M.
			Coach No. { With time-piece sent out { safe, No. to
	12 5	1 25	Arrived at Waltham Cross at 9.25
Sherman - -	5 6		Hoddesdon
	3 5	1 1	Arrived at Ware at 10.26
Grisewood for Company.	10 3		Buntingford
	2 7	1 26	Arrived at Buckland at 11.52
Meyer for Company	4 0		Royston
	6 2	1 5	Arrived at Arrington at 12.57
Bradshaw - -	5 2		Caxton
	9 3	1 33	Arrived at Huntingdon at 2.30 A.M.
Hennessy - -	5 2	0 33	Arrived at Alconbury Hill at 3.3
Coveney - -	7 1	0 42	Arrived at Stilton at 3.45
	8 5		Wansford
Whincup - -	6 0	1 30	Arrived at Stamford at 5.15
	8 0	0 48	Arrived at Stretton at 6.3
	5 1		Coltersworth
Burbidge - -	8 1	1 20	Arrived at Grantham at 7.23 by time-piece, by clock
			Coach No. { Delivered the gone for- { time-piece safe, ward { No. to
		0 40	Forty minutes allowed
Burbidge - -	7 5	0 50	Arrived at Long Bennington at 8.53
Lawton - -	6 3	0 37	Arrived at Newark at 9.30
Gilstrap - -	10 5	1 4	Arrived at Scarthing Moor at 10.34
	2 3		Tuxford
Sharp - - -	7 0	1 15	East Retford
	3 2		Arrived at Barnby Moor at 11.49
	5 2		Bawtry
Inett - - -	4 4	0 58	Arrived at Rossington Bridge at 12 47
	4 3	0 25	Arrived at Doncaster at 1 12 P.M.
Dunhill - -	6 6	0 43	Arrived at Askern at 1.55
	13 3	1 26	Arrived at Selby at 3.21

TIME BILL OF THE LONDON AND EDINBURGH MAIL (*Continued*).

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed	London to York from Edinburgh.
	M. F.	H. M.	
Barber - - -	14 2	1 33	Arrived at York at 4.54 by time-piece, by clock
			Coach No. gone forward — Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
		0 40	Forty minutes allowed
Cattle and Maddocks	13 2	1 20	Arrived at Easingwold at 6·54
Hirst - - -	10 6	1 4	Arrived at Thirsk at 7.58
Hirst - - -	9 0	0 54	Arrived at Northallerton at 8.52
Smith - - - -	16 0	1 36	Arrived at Darlington at 10.28
Hoult - - -	9 3		Rushyford
	9 2	1 55	Arrived at Durham at 12.33
	6 2		Chester le Street
	8 2		Gateshead
		1 27	Arrived at Newcastle at 1.50 A.M., by time-piece, by clock
Clough - - -			Coach No. gone forward — Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
	14 4	1 32	Arrived at Morpeth at 3.22
Pearson - - -	10 1	1 1	Arrived at Felton at 4.23
Wilson - - -	9 0	0 54	Arrived at Alnwick at 5.17
McDonald and Lumsden.	14 6	1 30	Arrived at Belford at 6.47 by time-piece, by clock
			Coach No. gone forward — Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
		0 30	Thirty minutes allowed
Lumsden - -	15 2	1 30	Arrived at Berwick at 8.47
Bird and Mitchell	7 4		Ayton
	6 3	1 22	Arrived at Houndwood at 10.9
Cossar and Sawers -	15 6	1 32	Arrived at Dunbar at 11.41
McDonald - -	11 0	1 4	Arrived at Haddington at 12.45
Piper - - -	16 7	1 38	Arrived at General Post Office at Edinburgh, the of , at 2.23 P.M. by time-piece, by clock
			Coach No. arrived — Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
	397 3	42 23	

This was the time-bill in 1837, when, by way of

making greater speed, the Postmaster-General had stipulated that no stage should exceed ten miles.

Lord Campbell thus relates his experience of a journey by this mail some years previously :

'A journey to London was in those days (in the year 1798,) considered a very formidable undertaking. I was to perform it by the mail-coach, which had been recently established (the first mail to Edinburgh was started in 1784), and was supposed to travel with marvellous velocity, taking only three nights and two days for the whole distance from Edinburgh to London.

'But this speed was thought to be highly dangerous to the head, independently of all the perils of an overturn, and stories were told of men and women, who, having reached London with such celerity, died suddenly of an affection of the brain. My family and friends were seriously alarmed for me, and advised me at all events to stay a day at York to recruit myself.'

The fares, he mentions, were £10 from Edinburgh to London ; to York, £4 15s. ; and from York to London, £5 5s.

His further experience in travelling at a somewhat later period, namely in the year 1802, he thus relates :

'Left the White Bear, Piccadilly, at four in the

morning, six in and eight outside passengers. Changed horses at Dartford, and breakfasted at Rochester; dined at Canterbury, but the dinner was so bad I could not touch it, so employed an hour in visiting the cathedral, etc. We did not arrive at Dover before nine.'

Seventeen hours for a journey of seventy-one miles, the distance from London to Dover, must have been most tedious work, and anything but likely to cause 'an affection of the brain' from 'celerity,' like the Edinburgh mail; but the length of time consumed in this journey can in some measure be accounted for when it is noticed that the change was at Dartford, certainly not less than seventeen miles from Piccadilly, and then an hour or more seems to have been allowed for dinner at Canterbury.

I now give the time-bill of the London and Carlisle mail, because this continued to Glasgow, so that these two, the Edinburgh and the Glasgow, were the only two mails running from England into Scotland, and conveyed the whole of the correspondence backwards and forwards between the two countries; the Post-Office arrangements being such that they not only carried the London mail-bags and those of all places along the two roads they travelled, but they took on those from Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Exeter, and in fact, as I have said, the whole country.

Time Bill of the London and Carlisle Mail.

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed.	
	M. F.	H. M.	Despatched from the General Post Office the of , 183 , at 8 P.M.
			Coach No. { With time-piece sent out { safe, No. to
Sherman - -	11 2	1 18	Arrived at Barnet at 9.18
	8 4		Hatfield
	5 4	1 28	Arrived at Welwyn at 10.46
	6 3		Stevenage
	5 7	1 20	Arrived at Baldock at 12.6
W. and G. Wright-	7 5		Biggleswade
	1 4	0 56	Arrived at Caldecot at 1.2A.M.
	8 4	0 53	Arrived at Eaton at 1.55
Arnold - - -	5 4		Buckden
	5 1	1 4	Arrived at Alconbury at 2.59
Coveney - -	9 2	0 57	Arrived at Stilton at 3.56
T. Whincup - -	8 5		Wansford
	6 0	1 32	Arrived at Stamford at 5.28
H. Whincup - -	8 0	50	Arrived at Stretton at 6.18
	5 1		Coltersworth
	8 1	1 22	Arrived at Grantham at 7.40 by time-piece, by clock
Burbidge - -			Coach No. gone forward. } Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
		0 40	Forty minutes allowed.
	6 0	0 36	Arrived at Foston at 8.56
Lawton - - -	8 0	0 48	Arrived at Newark at 9.44
	13 1	1 19	Arrived at Ollerton at 11.3
Lister - - -	8 4	49	Arrived at Worksop at 11.52
Dawson - - -	8 3	48	Arrived at Bagley at 12.40
	4 1	23	Arrived at Wadsworth at 1.3 P.M.
Dunhill - - -			
	4 1	23	Arrived at Doncaster at 1.26
Outhwaite - -	14 3	1 27	Arrived at Pontefract at 2.53
	10 0	59	Arrived at Aberford at 3.52
	7 4	44	Arrived at Wetherly at 4.36
			Coach No. gone forward. } By time-piece at by clock ; off at by time-piece
Clemishaw - -			
		35	Thirty-five minutes allowed.
	12 1	1 12	Arrived at Boroughbridge at 6.23

TIME BILL OF THE LONDON AND CARLISLE MAIL (*Continued*).

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed.	
	M. F.	H. M.	
Cook - - -	12 1	1 12	Arrived at Leeming Lane at 7.35
Couldwell - -	11 0	1 6	Arrived at Catterick Bridge at 8.41
Fryer - - -	9 0	0 54	Arrived at Foxhall at 9.35
Martin - - -	4 4	0 27	Arrived at New Inn, Greta Bridge, at 10.2
	10 0	1 8	Arrived at New Spital at 11.10
	9 4	1 5	Arrived at Brough at 12.15
Fryer - - -	8 0	0 52	Arrived at Appleby at 1.7 A.M.
Donkin - - -	13 4	1 21	Arrived at Penrith at 2.28
Teather - -	9 3	0 55	Arrived at Hesketh at 3.23
Barton - - -	8 6	0 54	Arrived at the Post Office at Carlisle the of , 183 , at 4.17 A.M.
			Coach No. } By time-piece, arrived. } by clock
	302 7	32 17	

TIME BILL OF THE CARLISLE AND GLASGOW MAIL.

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed.	
	M. F.	H. M.	
			Despatched from the Post Office, Carlisle, the of , 183 , at 5 A.M. by time-piece, by clock
			London mail arrived at 4.17 A.M.
			Manchester mail arrived at 4.48
			Coach No. } With time-piece sent out. } safe, No. to
Teather junr. -	9 6	0 55	Arrived at Gretna at 5.55

TIME BILL OF THE CARLISLE AND GLASGOW MAIL (*Continued*).

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed.	
	M. F.	H. M.	
Burn and Paton -	9 2	0 53	Arrived at Ecclefechan at 6.48
	5 6		Lockerby
	5 0	1 1	Arrived at Dinwoodie Green at 7.49
Wilson - - -	9 3	0 53	Arrived at Beatock Bridge Inn at 8.42. Bags dropped here for Moffat, two miles distant.
			Toll Bar. Bags dropped here for Leadhills, six miles distant.
	14 0		
	4 3	1 44	Arrived at Abington at 10.26
	9 0	0 52	Arrived at Douglas Mill at 11.18. Bags dropped here for Douglas, two miles distant.
Burn and Paton -			Milton toll bar. Bags dropped for Lesmahago, four furlongs distant.
	6 0		
	2 0	0 46	Arrived at Knowknack at 12.4
	9 3	0 53	Arrived at Hamilton at 12.57
	11 0	1 3	Arrived at the Post Office, Glasgow, the of , 183 , at 2 P.M. by time-piece, at by clock.
			Coach No. arrived. Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
	94 7	9 0	

In like manner, as two mails conveyed all the correspondence to and from Scotland, three performed the same service for Ireland, viz., the Holyhead, the Gloucester—running through South Wales to Milford Haven, 264 miles, occupying a period

of twenty-eight hours—and the Bristol. The time-bills of the 'Holyhead' and 'Gloucester' follow. The Bristol was allowed eleven hours and three quarters.

TIME BILL OF THE LONDON AND HOLYHEAD MAIL.

Contractors' Names.	M. F.	Time Allowed. H. M.	
			Despatched from the General Post Office, the of , 183 , at 8 P.M.
			Coach No. { With time-piece sent out { safe, No.
	11 2		Barnet
Chaplin - -	6 1		Arrived at Colney at
	3 1		St. Albans
	3 7	2 44	Arrived at Redbourn at 10.44
	4 4		Market Street
Goude - - -	4 5	1 48	Dunstable
	8 6		Arrived at Brickhill at 12.32
	2 2	0 54	Fenny Stratford
Company - -	6 6		Arrived at Stony Stratford at 1.26 A.M.
	7 6	0 46	Arrived at Towcester at 2.12
Wilson - -	12 2	1 13	Arrived at Daventry at 3.25
Garner - - -	7 6	0 46	Arrived at Dunchurch at 4.11
Carter - -	11 2	1 7	Arrived at Coventry at 5.18
Thaddell - -	8 4		Arrived at Stonebridge at
	9 6	1 50	Arrived at Birmingham at 7.8 by time-piece, by clock
			Coach No. arrived { Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
		0 35	Thirty-five minutes allowed
Chapman and Brown	7 7	0 46	Arrived at Wednesbury at 8.28
			Bilston
	3 0	0 32	Arrived at Wolverhampton
Evans - - -	2 3		at 9.1
	12 4	1 13	Arrived at Shiffnall at 10.14
H. J. Taylor -	7 6	0 45	Arrived at Haygate at 10.59
			Bags dropped here, and taken up from Wellington, two miles distant
	10 2	1 0	Arrived at Shrewsbury at
J. Taylor - -		0 5	11.59. Five minutes allowed
	8 4	0 48	Arrived at Netcliffe at 12.52

TIME BILL OF THE LONDON AND HOLYHEAD MAIL (*Continued*).

Contractors' Names.		Time Allowed.	
	M. F.	H. M.	
Bolus - - -	9 4	0 53	Arrived at Oswestry at 1.45 P.M.
Griffith - - -	5 6		Chirk
	6 6	1 12	Arrived at Llangollen at 2.57
	10 2	1 0	Arrived at Corwen at 3.57
Clarke - - -		0 28	by time-piece, by clock Twenty-eight minutes allowed
	6 2	0 36	Arrived at Tynant at 5.1
Owen - - -	6 6	0 38	Arrived at Cernioge at 5.39
	7 2	0 42	Arrived at New Stables at 6.21
Hughes - - -	7 1	0 41	Arrived at Capel Curig at 7.2
	7 5	0 44	Arrived at Tynamus at 7.46
		0 5	Five minutes allowed at Penryn Arms
Bicknell - -	6 6 / 2 0	0 52	Arrived at the Ferry House at 8.43
Atkinson - -	10 0	1 0	Arrived at Mona Inn at 9.43
Spencer - -	12 4	1 12	Arrived at the Post Office, Holyhead, the of , 183 , at 10.55 P.M. by time-piece, by clock.
			Coach No. arrived { Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to
	259 2	26 55	

GENERAL POST OFFICE.—THE EARL OF LICHFIELD, HER MAJESTY'S POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

'LONDON AND GLOUCESTER TIME BILL.

Contractors' Names.	Number of Passengers.			Time Allowed.	
	In	Out	M. F.	H. M.	
					Despatched from the General Post Office the of , 183 , at P.M. by time-piece, at by clock.
					Coach No. sent out { With time-piece safe, No. to
					Arrived at Gloucester Coffee House at

LONDON AND GLOUCESTER TIME BILL (*Continued*).

Contractors' Names.	Number of Passengers. In	Out	M. F.	Time Allowed. H. M.	
			12 2		Arrived at Hounslow at
Messrs. Horne.			7 3		Colnbrook
			9 2	3 8	Arrived at Maidenhead at
			9 1		Henley
Costar and Waddell.			4 6		Nettlebed
			6 2		Arrived at Bensington at
			11 7	3 30	Arrived at Oxford at by time-piece, at by clock
				0 10	Ten minutes allowed
J. Masters & J. Masters, jun.			11 4	1 10	Arrived at Witney at
Day - -			7 2		Burford
			9 6	1 45	Arrived at Northleach at
Dangerfield -			7 4		Andoverford
			5 2	1 20	Arrived at Cheltenham at
					Seven minutes allowed
			9 2	0 50	Arrived at the Post Office, Gloucester, the of , 183 , at A.M. by time-piece, at by clock
			111 3	12 0	Coach No. arrived Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to

The time of working, etc.,
By command of the P. M. G.,
GEORGE STOW,
Surveyor and Superintendent.

One noted character appears among the persons horsing this mail—Day, the great racing man and trainer.

As a specimen of a slow mail the Portsmouth, it

will be seen, occupied nine hours in a journey of seventy-three miles only. It appears from the bill, which is dated April, 1841, that this mail had not then been put on the London and Southampton Railway for any part of its journey.

GENERAL POST OFFICE.—THE EARL OF LICHFIELD, HER MAJESTY'S POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

LONDON AND PORTSMOUTH TIME BILL.

Contractors' Names.	In	Out	M. F.	Time Allowed. H. M.	
					Despatched from the General Post Office, the of , 184 , at by time-piece, at by clock
					Coach No. sent out { With time-piece safe, No. to
					Arrived at the Gloucester Coffee House at
			13 0	1 35	Arrived at Kingston at
			4 0		Esher
			3 4		Cobham
Chaplin and Gray			3 7	1 25	Arrived at Ripley at
			6 1		Guildford
			4 2	1 18	Arrived at Godalming at
			2 1		Mousehill
			10 1	1 32	Arrived at Liphook at
			8 3	1 3	Arrived at Petersfield at
Wise - -			7 4	57	Arrived at Horndean at
			5 6		Cosham
Guy - -			4 6	1 20	Arrived at the Post Office, Portsmouth, the of , 184 , at by time-piece, at by clock
					Coach No. arrived { Delivered time-piece safe, No. to

The time of working each stage, etc. Up-time allowed the same.

By Command of the Postmaster-General,
GEORGE STOW, Surveyor and Superintendent.

The next mail is slower still than the Portsmouth, but then it was only a pair-horse mail, the 'Hastings,' the time-bill of which ran as follows:

GENERAL POST OFFICE.—VISCOUNT LOWTHER, HER MAJESTY'S POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

LONDON AND ST. LEONARDS TIME BILL.

Contractors' Names.	Passengers. In	Passengers. Out	M. F.	Time Allowed. H. M.	
					Despatched from the General Post Office the of , 184 , at by time-piece, at by clock
					Coach No. { With time-piece safe, No. to
Horne and Gray			10 5		Bromley
			4 3	1 53	Arrived at Farnborough at
Harris-			9 5		Arrived at Seven Oaks at
			6 6		Tunbridge
			5 3		Tunbridge Wells
			2 7	3 20	Arrived at Woodgate at
B. Pawley and E. Pawley			5 2		Lamberhurst
			2 6	0 58	Arrived at Stone Crouch at
Chamberlain and Emary			7 1	0 54	Arrived at Robertsbridge at
			4 7		Battle
			6 7	1 30	Arrived at Hastings at
				0 10	Ten minutes allowed.
			1 5	0 12	Arrived at the Post Office, St. Leonards, the of , 184 , at by time-piece, at by clock
			68 1	8 57	Coach No. { Delivered the time-piece safe, No. to arrived
Up-time				8 48	Returned

The time of working each stage is to be reckoned, etc., according to the form at the foot of all the mail time-bills used by the Postmaster-General.

By command of the Postmaster-General,
GEORGE STOW, Surveyor and Superintendent.

Down-time in 1840, nine hours. Up, 8.45
" " 1841 " " "
Distance, 1840 and 1841, 68m. 7f.

It appears that the contractors had found difficulty in keeping time with this mail as a pair-horse concern, especially as some parts of the road were very hilly, and they therefore had an interview with Mr. Stow, one of the inspectors of mail-coaches, on the subject, and as the proprietors addressed a letter to him, which will be subsequently given, he most probably requested them, according to established official custom, to submit their application to him in writing, in order that it might be laid before the Postmaster-General; but before adopting this course the proprietors held a meeting to settle the important document, and also some questions between themselves as to distances and supply of oil for the mail-lamps. A minute of their meeting ran as follows:

At a meeting of the Hastings Mail Proprietors, it is agreed as follows, viz.:

That the application to the General Post Office shall be made as per statement for an additional allowance beyond the present one.

That the distance each person shall share shall be the exact distance as per time-bill, adding at the two ends one mile additional, which will be as follows:

	Miles.	
Horne and Gray - - -	1	
Golden Cross to G. P. O. - -	1½	say 17
G. P. O. to Farnborough - -	15	
Harris - - - - - - -		25¼
E. Pawley - - - - - -		8
B. Pawley - - - - - -		7¼

	Miles.	
Chamberlain and Emary - -	$11\frac{3}{4}$	
,, ,, ,, - -	$1\frac{3}{4}$	say 14
,, ,, ,, - -	1	
		$71\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

That many disputes have arisen as to the allowance for oil in the accounts, whereby Messrs. Horne and Gray are to refund each £5 7s. ; and that Messrs. Emary and Chamberlain be allowed one quarter's oil each from Christmas, 1840, to Lady Day, 1841, £6 8s. 2d. each, and to January 5th, 1842, each party since Michaelmas to be paid alike, when Messrs. Horne, Gray, Emary and Chamberlain are to render at each quarter's settlement the bill for the exact quantity supplied.

B. W. Horne,	Robt. Gray, Junr.,
John Harris,	Jas. Emary,
Benjm. Pawley,	Wm. Chamberlain,
Edwd. Pawley,	H. Horne.

It will be seen that there were two London proprietors in this concern, Horne of the Golden Cross, and Robert Gray of the Bolt in Tun. The result of the above meeting was transmitted to Mr. Stow in the following letter :

Golden Cross, Dec. 28th, 1841.

Sir,

Since our interview with you this morning, we have given consideration to the future working and payment for such duties as relate to the Hastings and St. Leonards mail.

1st. That to keep better time, and satisfy the parties who are working over bad ground, at a great disadvantage, the present mails be drawn throughout by four horses, at an additional allowance of threepence a double mile.

2nd. That the present contract as to time and coaches be continued, leaving either party to work four horses as the stage may require, to enable him to keep time, and not to destroy the horses ;

and as we feel that the mail would be supported less than now, should it travel at less than the present speed, and earnings being already very indifferent (not fifty shillings a mile) we trust that his lordship, the Postmaster-General, will allow us an additional twopence per double mile, from and after the 5th of January next, to continue the present contract under these circumstances, should he not compel us to make it a four-horse mail throughout.

3rd. We further beg to state that, as the South Eastern Railway will probably be opened in May next, we trust our contract will be permitted to be determinable by either party giving to the other three months' notice at any period after the 5th of April next.

We are, etc.,

B. W. HORNE, H. HORNE,
ROBT. GRAY, JUNR., W. CHAMBERLAIN,
BENJM. PAWLEY, EDWD. PAWLEY,
JOHN HARRIS, JAMES EMARY.

GEO. STOW, ESQ.

To this letter Mr. Stow replied:

General Post Office, Jan. 11th, 1842.

SIR,

I have submitted to the Postmaster-General the letter addressed to me on the 28th ulto., by the contractors for the London and St. Leonards mail; and I have much pleasure in acquainting you that his lordship has been pleased to grant the contractors an additional twopence per double mile to enable them to work the coach with four horses over the hilly and difficult parts of the road. I request, therefore, that you will communicate with the Company, and have it thoroughly understood, that under any circumstances the time is in future to be strictly maintained.

I am, sir,
Yours, etc.,
GEO. STOW.

B. W. HORNE.

The next time-bill is that of a coach that travelled much the same road as the Hull mail, but not at so fast a pace, and with longer time allowed for stoppages, and consequently was about two hours and a half longer in performing the journey. Unlike the other time-bills, however, it does not give the distances the coach was horsed by the several proprietors.

EXPRESS TIME BILL.

Down, 30th August, 1837. Guard.
Despatched from Spread Eagle at 4.30 o'clock.

Proprietors.	Towns.	Time Allowed.	Should Arrive.	Did Arrive.	State Cause of Delay.
		H. M.	H. M.	H. M.	
Chaplin - -	Watton - -	3 20	7 50		
L. Wright -	Baldack - -	1 26	9 16		
W. Wright -	Biggleswade -	0 55	10 11		
Waples - -	Eaton - -	1 11	11 22		
	Supper - -	0 25	11 47		
Dexter and Cartwright -	Alconbury Hill -	1 30	1 17		
Core - - -	Peterborough -	1 40	2 57		
Layton - -	Bourne - -	1 57	4 54		
Bailey - -	Folkingham -	1 6	6 0		
	Breakfast - -	0 25	6 25		
Bellany - -	Sleaford - -	1 6	7 31		
Cox - - -	Green Man -	1 6	8 37		
Stephenson -	Lincoln - -	1 3	9 40		
	Office (duty) -	0 15	9 55		
Keyworth - -	Spital - -	1 25	11 20		
Walkden - -	Brigg - -	1 20	12 40		
Walkden - -	Barton - -	1 20	2		

The up-coaches left Barton waterside at half-past five, and the times were slightly varied. Thirty minutes were allowed for supper at Lincoln, and

thirty minutes for breakfast at Buckden, and different names appear in some instances in the up-bill. These allowances of half an hour each for supper and breakfast are more liberal than those accorded to the passengers on the day-coach from London to Manchester, who only got twenty minutes for their breakfast, and the same time for their dinner; but then, in order to get through the long distance in the day, it was absolutely necessary to economize time as much as possible, and only devote to stoppages for any purpose whatever so much as was indispensable.

Of course, the shorter the time allowed for meals the better for the innkeepers. Twenty minutes to get off some of your wraps, or at all events warm your fingers a little in very cold weather, so as to enable you to hold a knife and fork or spoon, and some time to wrap yourself up again, left little to devote to the actual consumption of the eatables and drinkables; and he must have been a very quick feeder who could get half-a-crown or three-and-sixpence-worth out of the meal. Anyone starting with a plate of hot soup—if there was such a thing on the table—would inevitably be out of the hunt altogether.

Railways, it is true, only allow about ten minutes at refreshment stations; but then you go such long distances in so short a time, that even in a journey

from London to Edinburgh, Glasgow, or the extreme west, you may travel without any refreshment, and yet without subjecting yourself to the inconvenience or suffering of a Dr. Tanner.

According to the latest railway arrangements, I believe you may now dine while the train is actually continuing on its journey, so that you are entirely independent of any stoppages for getting a meal. This is the Express of to-day; the old Expresses were coaches bearing that name, but not travelling at an extra rate of speed.*

* The horse expresses, for conveyance of letters only, seem to have fallen into disuse long before even the fast coaches were put on the road.

CHAPTER XV.

COACHMEN.

In coaching-days there used to be four brothers driving on the western roads—the eldest on the Oxford, and the other three on the Bath.

Their name was Stacey, and according to seniority I believe they ranged thus—William, Richard, John, and Henry; as they were known on the road by the customary abbreviations of Bill, Dick, Jack, and Harry, and as I never heard them called anything else, I will adhere to those names in speaking of them.

Their positions when I first became acquainted with them were—Bill on a day-coach from London to Oxford; Dick on the Bristol mail from London to Newbury, down one night and up the next; Jack on one side of the Bath mail, between the same places, down one night and up the next; and Harry on the other side, in the same way.

I seldom travelled with Bill, and never with Dick; but often with the other two, both between London and Newbury and on the lower ground, where Harry was

driving a coach between Newbury and Bristol. They were very pleasant men to travel with, there being nothing in the slightest degree low or slangy about them. Jack's countenance, when he was recounting anything at all funny, was inexpressibly comical.

He once related to me the following circumstance in connection with one of his earliest applications to be put on a coach; I must premise, however, that the story unavoidably loses half its zest for want of the narrator's countenance.

He applied to Costar and Waddell, the large coach-proprietors at Oxford, for a situation; but from the remark that old Costar made, I assume that his appearance was not quite of the 'down-the-road' order, and led Costar to doubt whether it would be advisable to employ him.

Costar remarked to some one who was with him that he 'didn't like the curl in the brim of the young man's hat.' Jack did not hear the remark at the time, but by some means it afterwards reached his ears, when, as he said in telling the story to me, 'I soon had the curl out of the brim of my hat.'

To say we had a hearty laugh over it is perhaps quite unnecessary; he did not, however, work for Costar and Waddell. The story, I presume, he communicated to his brothers, who most likely took the hint; for certainly when I became acquainted with

them some years afterwards, they all wore their hats with the brims guiltless of any curl, and as flat as a billiard-table, which was in accordance with the shape of the 'down-the-road' hats of that period.

Before going on the Bath mail Jack Stacey drove Cooper's 'Old Company' day-coach from London to his Cottage at Thatcham for several years, down one day and up the next, and lodging at the Cottage. The situation was easy and pleasant; he left Piccadilly every other morning, including Sundays, as the coach ran every day, at seven o'clock, and reached the Cottage at ten minutes to one, when the coach stopped for the passengers to dine, and his day's work was finished. The next day he got on the box again at the Cottage, at two o'clock, and drove up to town, reaching Piccadilly at the Old White Horse Cellar at ten minutes to eight. That the coach travelled at a fast pace may be known by the fact of its doing the fifty-three miles in five hours and fifty minutes, with six changes, and not any guard to help or other horsekeepers than their own, Cooper not being connected with any other coach-proprietor on the road. I believe none of the other coachmen boarded or lodged at the Cottage.

The 'York House,' which was the crack day-coach to Bath, left Piccadilly at the same time as the 'Old Company;' but it was a matter of etiquette between

the coachmen that they should only pass each other either at a change or stoppage, which was not an unusual arrangement on other roads.

It happened, however, one day, that the coachman on the 'York House' violated this rule; but Stacey managed to pass him again before reaching Thatcham, and when the 'York House' came by at a pretty brisk pace, the 'Old Company' coach was standing at the Cottage with the horses off, and Stacey was at the door with a spoon in one hand and a basin of soup in the other, which he held up for the inspection of the coachman and passengers on the 'York House.' It is, perhaps, needless to add that the coachman was very savage; but the passengers seemed to enjoy the joke greatly—they had to go three miles farther on to Newbury before they stopped for dinner.

Stacey continued working for Cooper until the failure of the latter, when he got put on to the Bath mail by Chaplin. As all Cooper's coachmen and guards were paid by himself, it naturally happened that at the time of his failure he was indebted to several of them in considerable amounts, Stacey being among the number, and in due course they substantiated their claims in a legal form; the process I could not understand exactly, but according to his account an individual whom he designated a 'Master in Chancery' was mixed up in the business.

J. Sturgess del. et lith

Hannart imp

WITH A SPOON IN ONE HAND & A BASIN OF SOUP IN THE OTHER

Unluckily for the creditors, the dividend paid was so small that the recipients at once proceeded to dispose of it in some sort of festivity, consisting probably of a good dinner, accompanied by something to console them for their irreparable loss. I think I may venture to state that it was not a Blue-Ribbon party. That the occurrence did not awaken any melancholy reflections in after years in Stacey's mind I can bear ample testimony, from his hilarity when he related the circumstances to me, not many years since—long after all the coaches had been taken off the road by the Great Western Railway.

He drove the Bath mail about seven years without any accident, although it was timed at a pretty good pace, but not quite so fast as the Bristol, of which he availed himself one foggy night as a sort of pioneer; but something being said about his being late, he replied that he was quite sure that couldn't be the case, as he had kept his leaders' noses close up to the hind-boot of the Bristol mail, which should have been some distance before him.

In the Bristol mail sharing account will be seen an item of 'Runners, £1 13s. 4d.,' the meaning of which I dare say may puzzle those of my readers who are not intimately acquainted with London mail or coaching accounts; so I will explain it, especially as it is connected with a somewhat ludicrous incident which

happened with the Bath mail during the time Stacey drove it.

The mails going westward all started from the City, where the principal part of their passengers were booked ; but some places, say one inside and one outside, were reserved for those residing at the West End, and who could book their places at one of the West-End offices in the Regent Circus, Gloucester Coffee House, or other office in connection with that in the City, so that if all the City places were booked and an application was made for another seat, the book-keeper would start a quick man, such as was always to be found about a coach-office, to go up to the West-End office, and if there was a vacant seat secure it. This man, then, was the 'runner,' and he would return to the City and inform the book-keeper of the result of his journey.

Such a thing as a mail going out of Piccadilly with more than four inside I suppose was never heard of, except in the instance I am about to relate, as Mr. Johnson, for many years one of the mail inspectors, said he never had any occasion to proceed against persons who had carried more passengers than the contract allowed, although he had proceeded against a good number of persons at different times when they had been refractory, and wilfully lost time.

One night the Bath mail was booked full inside all

the way down, when a gentleman, who was a regular customer, wanted to return home to Marlborough, and there was no other means of his getting there. Stacey held a council with the book-keeper, observing that it wouldn't do to leave the gentleman behind, as he was a constant customer; but how they were to get out of the dilemma, neither of them was able to explain. Ultimately, I believe, it was solved by the gentleman himself getting in just as the mail was starting. So off they went from Piccadilly with five inside. A squeeze it must have been, even if they were all small men; but on this point I have no information.

Arrived at the Bear at Maidenhead, where they changed, Stacey went to the coach-door and said:

'There's time for you to get a cup of coffee here, gentlemen, if you like just to get out.'

Not one, however, would move, fearful that if once out he might not be able to get in again. In this way, packed about as close as sardines in a box, they travelled down to Newbury, fifty-six miles from London, and the end of Stacey's journey. They had then, however, seventeen miles to go on to Marlborough, where the extra passenger resided, and he got out without any expression of regret either on the part of himself or his fellow-passengers at the parting.

Stacey related the story with great glee to me, especially as the difficulty had been got over without any breach of his duty or his being involved in any row about it.

Driving, although for several years a good deal of it was night-work, does not seem to have disagreed with Stacey, who died at Newbury about two years since at the age of eighty.

A partnership of coach-proprietors at Speenhamland (or, as it was better known on the Bath road, Newbury, of which place it, in fact, formed part), like the coach proprietors on some other lines of road, issued a printed form similar to a bank-note, announcing the starting and arrival of some of their coaches; it ran in this way:

Greyhound, Market Place. } N.B.—Mercury in fourteen hours.
George Masters, Bank, Speenhamland.

Chippenham, Marlborough, Newbury, Reading, Maidenhead and London post-coaches set out from the Greyhound, Market Place, Bath, every day, at four, afternoon, to Hatchetts Hotel, Piccadilly, and Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, London. Coaches also from the Pope's Head, and Pelican. Bristol every day to the above inns in London, by

MAY AND MOUNTAIN.

Royal Blue.

Fare—inside, one guinea; outside, twelve shillings.

In the left-hand corner was a drawing of a greyhound, with some building representing the inn known by that sign.

In the place where the words 'Royal Blue' were printed was some ornamental printing work, similar to that on bank-notes.

I have only known one other instance of what I may call a coach being overbooked inside, and that happened to a coachman on quite a different road, who gave this account of it:

'On one occasion, I remember that on a wet spring morning I found the coach had been overbooked, which subjected the proprietors to the charge of a post-chaise for the whole distance, involving an expense of ten pounds, in which the unfortunate book-keeper who had committed the error would be unmercifully mulcted. On my arrival at Kingsland Gate, having already three inside passengers, one of whom was a baronet, two others, whose names had been entered in the book for a week, claimed their places.

'I had been made acquainted with the error prior to my mounting the box, and earnestly pressed by the delinquent to do all I could to save him from the penalty.

'Accordingly I got down, and knowing that with rational people a plain statement of facts has always the best effect, I explained, in as few words as possible, the nature of the dilemna we were in.

'"You are bound to find a conveyance, coachman," said a crusty old limb of the law, who sat muffled up in one corner.

'"I am aware of that, sir," I replied; "but I was about to submit to you the hardship that one poor subordinate of the establishment will have to suffer if you are all determined to take advantage of this error and keep your seats.'

'"How do you propose to remedy it?" asked the Baronet.

'"It can only be remedied in one way," said I, "and that is by one getting out."

'"And which of us is that to be? Are we to cast lots?" he inquired.

'"Why," I replied, "in common fairness it ought to be the last who was booked. This lady and gentleman" (who were standing at the coach door; I knew them to be the widow of Buonaparte's General Drouet and her son) "have been booked a week."

'"And who was the last to pay?"

'"You, Sir William," I said.

'Without another word or further delay, he at once got out, and taking the seat beside me which I had purposely reserved, we proceeded on our journey, and he said not a word in disparagement of my decision.'

The man to whom the above incident occurred had at one time been a coach-proprietor as well as a coachman, and was the son of a coach-proprietor in a large way of business. After his death the son continued in business in both capacities for some

years, and still drove after ceasing to be a proprietor. Anticipating the entire abolition of coach-travelling, he drew up a petition to Parliament on the subject, and got it presented by a member for the town in which he resided, and from which he used to drive. The petition, like a great many others, was ordered to lie on the table, and was, I believe, never heard of any more. Some of the views and opinions expressed in it are rather singular, so I think I cannot do better than quote it in the petitioner's exact words. It ran thus :

'That your petitioner was originally brought up in a noble profession, but from a visitation of Providence and other circumstances over which he had no control, was compelled to seek subsistence as a stage-coachman.

'That your petitioner has now followed that employment for eight-and-twenty years, and during this time has been enabled to provide for a wife and large family in a respectable manner.

'That your petitioner has seen, with considerable dismay, the invention and rapid increase of railroads during the last few years, accomplishing the ruin of hundreds in the same employment as your petitioner, and now, by the numerous bills before your Honourable House, threatening the very livelihood of your petitioner and his numerous family.

'That your petitioner, not actuated by selfish motives alone, but viewing with deep sympathy the distress, the discontent, the poverty and the ruin that has lately, and does now, partially pervade the land, would humbly point out to your Honourable House how much the invention and use of railroads has had to do with their increase.

'That your petitioner, passing over the large amount invested in turnpike trusts, now become bankrupt, in consequence of substituting railroad for stage-coach travelling, which has been more than once mooted in your Honourable House, would proceed at once to show the direct injury, the devastating ruin that has fallen, not only on those immediately connected with stage-coach business (with the exception of a few, and those of an extraordinary character), but through them on every class of tradesmen inhabiting towns situate in any of our great thoroughfares, whether they be north, south, east or west.

'That your petitioner would further proceed to show that this injury has its ramifications from one end of the island to the other, threatening the depreciation of property to a ruinous extent, as a proof of which your petitioner need only point to every town in the kingdom which a railroad has approached, except two or three of our largest cities and towns, and even to them the benefit would

become questionable should the state of every class of their overcrowded populations be strictly looked into.

'That your petitioner is not unwilling to admit the convenience, the luxury, nay, even the safety and importance as regards speed of the new mode of travelling, as also to acknowledge the truth of the French philosopher's axiom, that the quick communication of persons and thoughts is the very perfection of civilization; but your petitioner would humbly submit that luxury is not happiness, any more than civilization is prosperity in a nation or in a family.

'That your petitioner views with considerable alarm for the welfare and happiness of his country the immense amount of capital already invested in railroads, amounting, with the cost of those now introduced or intended to be introduced to your Honourable House, to more than three hundred millions* sterling, and that your petitioner's alarm arises from this vast accumulation of capital, its tendency having been at all times, and in all nations, to make the rich man richer and the poor man poorer, thereby oppressing the working classes,

* According to the late Board of Trade return, the capital invested in railways, in the United Kingdom, is seven hundred and eighty-four millions, and upwards.

and grinding our already debased peasantry to the very extreme of misery, inducing the increase of atrocious crime to a most fearful extent.

'That your petitioner would also show that these monster establishments render anything like competition impossible, and create a monopoly which, under any circumstances and in any form, is, has been, and ever will be, inimical to the best interests of the community.

'That your petitioner witnesses the investment of such capital in a financial point of view by individuals in certain trunk lines as being beneficial as well to the country as to the shareholders, inasmuch as they (the latter) get good interest for their money, and are thereby enabled in some measure to counteract the evil they have produced; while others, many of them—some that have passed and others now before your Honourable House—originating in false premises, and projected by artful and designing men, are calculated to give rise to a spirit of gambling, successful for a while, but which must ultimately involve, if they have not already done so, the ruin of thousands who have, under some specious pretexts, consented to become their dupes, such systematic adventurous schemes being derogatory to the national character, subversive of that safe and healthy state which the monetary transactions of a great commercial

country should ever enjoy, incompatible with the industrious habits as well as prejudicial to the social, moral and religious obligations of the people.

'That your petitioner has long and deeply thought of and deplored the late dilapidated state of our finances, the state of our debt, revenue, expenditure, and resources, as well as our present unwholesome system of taxation; and your petitioner, with his faculties unimpaired, and the same zeal to serve his country as he had when he first put his foot on board of a man-of-war, is prepared to prove before any committee your Honourable House shall appoint, upon certain returns being produced, that such a revenue can be raised from the present mode of travelling, as shall surpass all others in its efficiency, its safety, its equality, its justice, and its policy, and that, too, without any interference with vested rights.

'And here your petitioner cannot but remind your Honourable House that in cases where great changes have been wrought, care has always been taken of vested rights; such as with the Municipal Reform Bill, which provides compensation for the clerks of different corporate towns.

'Therefore your petitioner, lastly, prays that in passing any bills having reference to railroads, in some or one of them such provision shall be made

as shall prevent your petitioner and his family from coming to the extreme of misery.

'And your petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.'

I do not know in what manner the petitioner proposed to raise a revenue from 'the present mode of travelling' which should 'surpass all others,' as the great grievance of the coach-proprietors always was the heavy taxation to which they were subjected, and the unfairness of the duties to which their business was assessed by Government—while the imposts either on railroads or steamers were wholly disproportionate, and did not place the different modes of travelling on a fair basis of competition.

In the early part of his petition the petitioner states that he was 'not actuated by selfish motives alone,' in presenting his petition; and for this I think one may fairly give him credit, knowing, as he must have done, many persons engaged like himself in the coaching business, and entirely dependent upon it for their livelihood: so that while advocating his own cause he was also assisting them, but the concluding paragraph in his petition I may now comment upon without fear of either hurting his feelings or prejudicing his position.

The request that in some, or at least one of any railway bills to be introduced in Parliament, some

provision should be made to 'prevent him and his family from coming to the extreme of misery' savours rather of the comic element; and if a similar provision extending to all persons similarly situated had also been inserted in the railway bills, the companies would have had a considerable reserve fund to provide. Moreover, his petition came rather late, as it was not presented till 1846, when all the principal lines out of London had not only got their Acts, but opened part of their lines, and so far as coaches out of London were concerned, had cleared them off the road, together with their coachmen and guards. Before this time, though, the petitioner gave some advice useful even to young coachmen of the present day, which I will here repeat as the result of his extensive practical experience:

'It is an old saying, and a very true one, that four horses well put together are half driven, therefore no man can be a proficient in the art without paying the nicest attention to the bitting, bridling, harnessing, putting to, and coupling his teams; and without such attention, as well as the proper length of each trace, the pole-chains, and a proper adjustment of the curb, and seeing that the collar, pads, and harness fit in every part, that every buckle and strap is in its right place, no man can drive in crowded streets with precision and safety.

'By this attention, too, the horse goes with more ease to himself, and is less likely to gall and chafe, which will frequently make the best-tempered animal fretful and fractious in harness.

'The consequence and the necessity of paying a strict attention to and acquiring a perfect knowledge of these early rudiments of our art, I once experienced myself.

'Beginning at the Golden Cross, passing through the City, and making my exit by Shoreditch Church from the metropolis, I had plenty of stonework. One morning a fresh horse was put to my coach, one that had only been purchased the day before, and, what was contrary to all adopted custom, harnessed as near leader. It was of no use to expostulate, so after looking round I got up. Starting and proceeding along the Strand and Fleet Street he went pretty straight, except that he carried his body rather away from his partner, as young horses in a strange or new position are apt to do; but a slight communication from under his bar soon put that to rights. After stopping at the corner of Wood Street we proceeded along Cheapside by the Bank to the commencement of Threadneedle Street, where he made a bolt to go down Broad Street. I had my hand upon his rein in an instant, and prevented his taking the wrong road; but there being a post in the shape of a gun with the

muzzle downwards, I could not catch him up in time to prevent his going on the inside of it. In the same instant, seeing that the leaders' bars would be caught by the post, having my wheel-horses tight in hand, I drew their reins back. This caused them to throw their heads up, and that, acting upon the pole-chains, jerked the bars over the top of the post; at the same moment, as it were, hitting the near wheel-horse, he brought the splinter-bar clear, and neither horse, harness, nor any part of the coach or carriage touched the post. This occupied only a few seconds, for the wheels never ceased turning, and the escape from any accident must be attributed to the care and nicety with which the horses were harnessed and put to, and proves the necessity of a coachman having a perfect knowledge of the bearings of every part of the harness, so as to have a perfect command of his wheel-horses; for here there were three chances, that is, of the bars coming in contact with the post, the pole breaking in the splinter-bar, or the near fore-wheel striking the post, either of which might have been attended with bad consequences, and was avoided by the pole-chains being of a proper length, and the wheel-horses being properly curbed up.

'Many accidents, some of them of a most serious nature, have occurred from neglect or want of knowledge of these indispensable rules, and no man can be

called a perfect master of the art of driving without possessing a matured judgment and experience on these points. He may have admirable skill in using the whip, but without the former qualifications he will never attain anything like perfection.'

The proprietors were the most important men connected with the road, as they provided the capital for purchase of the horses, harness, etc.; but although, according to the old adage, it is 'money makes the mare to go,' there was a good deal besides money required to make many of the mares go that were put into the coaches, especially with some men's stock, with whom it was rather a principle, though not openly avowed, to engage their coachmen by the same rule that a man would enlist the services of a professional pugilist; it being considered that the man that could hit hardest would produce the greatest effect on the horses, and get them along when a man of less athletic power might be unequal to the task. A man would be rather chary of complaining that he could not get the horses along, as he might have been met with the remark that perhaps some other man could. This would apply more to the days when coaches were not so well horsed as in later times, and also to heavy night-coaches.

When a coach was loaded with two or three hundred

parcels, and packages weighing nearly three tons, without passengers, it wanted a good deal of horse-power to get it through the country; and the coachman and guard, with fourteen or fifteen passengers altogether, weighed close upon, if they did not exceed, four tons; the guard forming no inconsiderable addition, if like the one on the Leeds 'Courier,' who was said to weigh twenty stone.

William Mills was the proprietor and driver of a coach called the 'Royal Forester,' starting from Monmouth early in the morning, running to Gloucester, a distance of twenty-eight miles, through Coleford and the Forest of Dean, stopping at the King's Head, and returning in the afternoon. The main road from Monmouth to Gloucester, and on to London, did not run this way, but through Ross, and had this disadvantage, that when the floods were out in the valley of the Wye, the road for a considerable distance beyond Monmouth, where it ran parallel to and very near the river, would be under water to the depth of several feet; and you might see the London mail going along, with the water up to the coach doors, although the mails were then built much higher than at a later period.

This road, however, was afterwards altered, and carried from the town over higher ground farther away from the river, so avoiding the floods alto-

gether. Another advantage gained by the alteration was an improvement in the entrance to the town, that was formerly by a narrow street known as Church Street, which at the London end had a house the upper part of which projected over the pavement, so that if the wheels of a coach just cleared it, an outside passenger could barely escape coming in contact with the building; and there was scarcely room for two carriages to pass in this street, which was the main thoroughfare for all the traffic from London and intermediate places — as Oxford, Cheltenham, and Gloucester—to South Wales.

By running his coach through Coleford and Mitcheldean, Mills had the road all to himself, and I believe he made a very good thing of it.

The distance to be travelled not being great, and the passengers persons whose time was not very valuable, the wear and tear of his stock was inconsiderable; but if time had to be made up, and whipcord was required to be brought into play, he was fully capable of administering it, being a strong, powerful man; and I believe some of the coach-proprietors for whom he afterwards drove on other roads, thought he was rather too free in the use of it.

He afterwards drove, on the lower ground from Newbury to Bristol, the 'Monarch' night-coach; and

LEADERS OFF THE ROAD

during that time he had a guard of the name of Shinner, whom he one night, on the up-journey, unintentionally left behind at Hungerford, where they changed.

There were no passengers at the back of the coach, and the roof was loaded high with luggage, so that Mills did not notice that his guard was not up, and kept driving on, while the guard was in a little back bar-parlour, unaware that the coach had started without him; but by some means or other he managed to overtake it, most probably by jumping on one of the mails, which were a good deal faster than the 'Monarch,' and would be coming up about that time.

At one time Mills drove the Bristol and Liverpool mail, but whether it was before he went on to the 'Monarch,' I don't know. With another man he drove between Bristol and Hereford, a distance of fifty miles; but afterwards he drove the whole distance on both sides, up and down, making just 100 miles. Leaving Bristol in the evening, he reached Hereford about midnight, when he turned into bed for his night's rest, having to be ready for the up-mail from Liverpool, which arrived at Hereford about seven o'clock in the morning; and he then took it on to Bristol, reaching there about mid-day, having to cross the Severn at the Old Passage. By

this means he had the advantage of two sets of passengers, generally Bristol or Liverpool merchants and business men, who tipped pretty freely. As he said, at Hereford, when he opened the coach door and announced that it was the end of his journey, there were always four half-crowns ready for him. This, with the three or four outsides, must have made it a pretty good service, as the mail loaded well, and ran every night, including Sundays.

The road between Chepstow and Monmouth, at a place called Redbrook, where it joins the road running through the coal district in the Forest of Dean, on the right-hand side coming from Chepstow, is bounded by a steep hill, thickly wooded, which shades the road, and somewhat darkens it at night; added to which the coal dropped on the road, and black refuse from the coal-pits scattered about, make it almost black for a considerable distance.

The road is not very broad, but affords plenty of room for two vehicles to pass without difficulty by daylight. In this part of the road is a small bridge across the brook which gives the name to the locality, but being of brick—rendered rather dark in colour from the accumulation of coal-dust on it—and on the level of the road, without a rise or fall on either side, it is not a very conspicuous object on a dark night. In order to give some protection to

travellers, and prevent them from driving right up against the bridge, corner-stones, rounded off, are placed on each side of the bridge at both ends, similar to those which may be seen in many places where there is a sharp turning round a wall which forms a corner.

These stones at the ends of the bridge being rather obscured from the same cause as the road and the bridge itself, by way of seeing them better at night, Mills, when he was on the Bristol and Liverpool mail over this part of the ground, used to pay a cottager living close to the bridge half-a-crown a year to keep the stones well whitewashed, so that he might see them on the journey when coming from Bristol. The mail travelled at a great pace, and passed over this bridge about nine or ten o'clock at night; so what with the road being overshadowed, and the ground dark, it was not very comfortable travelling, even with good lamps. The hour when the mail passed along the road of course came to be pretty well known among the residents, who, in driving along it at the time when they expected shortly to meet or to be passed by the mail, drove into one of those spaces which are left along the sides of roads for depositing heaps of stones until broken and put down; and there they remained until the mail went by, probably

at a gallop, with its four lamps and a bull's-eye blazing away. If there did not happen to be a stone depôt at hand when the mail was heard coming, they squeezed as close as possible into the hedge, and waited there till it had passed.

The coachman who drove on the other side with Mills was a tall and powerful man, known by the name of Jack White. He was not a member of the Blue Ribbon Army, as I discovered in travelling on the mail with him one night.

Just before entering the town of Monmouth, and where the road is rather on the descent, a tramway, used only for coal waggons drawn by horses, crosses the road, and has, therefore, to be crossed by the mail; it happened in doing so, either from the jerk the mail received in crossing the tramway quickly, or from some other cause to which I need not further allude, Mr. White was pitched off the box, but most miraculously without sustaining any serious injury, or the horses bolting with the coach, which arrived safely at the Beaufort Arms in the market-place, where they had to turn round before changing, in order to get into the road leading to Hereford, the next town the mail passed through after leaving Monmouth.

Mail-coachmen and mail-guards did not always work quite harmoniously together, and when any

difference or ill-feeling arose between them, there was a difficulty in setting matters straight, owing to the circumstance of the men being servants of different masters, although having to continue working together. On the coaches it was otherwise, where the coachman and guard were both under the same body of proprietors, who had the power of dismissing the guard if he was in fault; but they had no control over the mail-guard, the servant of the Postmaster-General, who, if the guard discharged his official duties properly, would not pay any attention to differences between him and the coachmen.

I think the guard had rather the command of the position, and could make himself more objectionable both to the coachmen and proprietors than they could by retaliating upon him in any way. He could refuse to allow the coachman to stop at any place not down on the way-bill for the purpose, and report him to the Post Office if he did so; while when they were on good terms there was generally some little public-house where they used to pull up just for a minute or two.

The guard might also report the state of the harness or horses if the condition of either led to any loss of time; and although it formed part of his duty to assist in changing horses when not

engaged with Post-Office work, he might render next to no assistance without laying himself open to any charge of neglect of duty: so, time being lost in the changes, a report to the Post Office might bring down an inspector on the proprietors, who, in their turn, would be down on the coachman.

It happened that while Mills was on the Bristol and Liverpool mail there was a young fellow, one of the guards, who made himself very offensive to him. This young fellow had just started a new drab overcoat, of which he thought a good deal, and did not fail to show it. It struck Mills one night that this would afford a good opportunity of paying him off for the annoyance he had given, and if any alteration was necessary in the harness during a stage he would call to the guard, whose duty it was to get down and make it. So Mills pulled up and called to this guard, who got down and came to the front in the drab coat, when Mills told him to alter the near wheeler's inside trace a hole. This necessitated the unhooking the rusty, muddy pole-chain, rubbing against the pole and horse, and pulling and tugging about for some time, but all to no purpose, for the buckle probably had not been out of the hole for a long time; so Mills told him to poke the horse up again. Need I add that the appearance of the drab coat was not improved—much to the chagrin of the

wearer, but to the gratification of the coachman, who got on just as well without the trace being altered, seeing that it was not at all necessary in the first instance, and was only ordered as a means of paying off an instalment of an old score, although I don't think this fact was communicated to the wearer of the coat.

If they happened to be travelling through a rather hilly country, a few extra occasions of having the drag put on unnecessarily might be made available, The relative position of the mail guard and coachman was illustrative of the difficulty of serving two masters.

As I was a good deal amused by the story Mills told me one day of an unprofitable journey he made, I will repeat it as nearly as I can recollect, merely premising that it took place some forty-five or fifty years since, and in the days when pugilistic encounters were openly conducted, and the names, weights, and colours of the combatants, together with detailed accounts of the encounters, were duly reported in the sporting papers.

A fight between two noted men—one, I think, a Londoner, and the other a Bristol man—was announced to come off somewhere on the borders of the Forest of Dean, and Mills engaged an omnibus and four horses to take a fabulous number of persons from

Monmouth to the scene of action, about six or seven miles, at a certain rate per head.

On the morning of the eventful day he started with a full load, and after travelling along some by-lanes reached the spot which was supposed to be the right place.

Numbers of people from Monmouth and the neighbourhood had done the same, and being in the vicinity of the coal-pits in the forest, it is scarcely necessary to add that the pitmen mustered strong. Not so, however, the belligerents, neither of whom appeared; and after waiting some time a report got about that the event was to come off at another place some few miles off. Hence a move became necessary along some narrow lanes, and this place being at last reached, the multitude concluded that they had now actually arrived at the correct spot, and that the event they had come out to see would certainly come off. No better success, however, awaited them here than at the spot where they first halted; and at last it became certainly known that nothing would come off, though they were not able to ascertain for what reason.

At all events, no fight took place, much to the disappointment and vexation of those present, including the omnibus passengers, who were loud and vigorous in their expressions of dissatisfaction; and

in order in some measure to appease them, Mills had to refresh them all liberally. Then, having come out for the day, they did not feel disposed to return immediately, which rendered long and repeated stoppages necessary at divers public-houses, where they seemed to take it as a matter of course that Mills, having brought them out, must provide them with all they chose to have in the way of eating and drinking, till they were landed again in Monmouth. The unfortunate termination of the day's excursion for Mills was that he spent all the money he received for conveying the people on the omnibus from Monmouth and back again, in treating them while they were out in order to quiet and reconcile them to their disappointment, although it was no fault of his.

No doubt some people will say, 'Sarved him right!' but in those days amusements and sports were looked upon in a different light to what they are now. We need not go many years further back to learn that the prize-ring was patronized by the highest members of the aristocracy, even including royalty.

Lord Althorp, a great agriculturist—Chancellor of the Exchequer, who brought in the Poor Law Act in 1834, under which the present system of poor-law unions was established, and who afterwards succeeded to the title of Earl Spencer—made it a point, in

fact considered it almost a matter of duty, to attend every prize-fight between men of any notoriety. So that with such examples I don't think Mills was much to blame after all.

When he left off coaching he had for some years a public-house in Monmouth.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SCRATCH TEAM.

As scratch teams consisted of horses put together promiscuously, which had not previously been working in company, so I purpose in this chapter putting together short accounts of a few persons and circumstances which from time to time have come to my knowledge, but have not been put together before.

The first I will take is Green—which, I think, my narrative will show is a most appropriate name—and in order to distinguish him from his father, I will call him 'Young Green.' But before proceeding further I must state that the narrative is strictly according to fact, merely *mutato nomine*, as members of the family, whose real name is by no means common, would almost certainly be recognised by it.

To proceed, then. Young Green was the second son of the Rev. (I cannot do better than call him) Very Green, a gentleman who shortly after leaving Oxford became the rector of an extremely small parish, some 120 miles down in the West of England,

in the stone-wall country. The living was of small value, but there was a snug rectory-house; and the rector, being possessed of private means, kept his carriage and horses, farmed his glebe land, and lived very comfortably, having, like most country clergymen, a quiver full—consisting of his eldest son, who took Holy Orders, four spinster daughters, Young Green, and two boys at school, one at Winchester, the other at Eton.

Like many university men of his day, he was, I suppose, about as unacquainted as a man well could be with business matters; and indeed I question very much if he had ever been in anyone's counting-house or office in his life when he settled down in his parish, where he became, comparatively speaking, shut out from the world. He was eventually made a magistrate, which brought him into contact with some of the neighbouring squires and gentry when attending the magistrates' meetings—held some two or three times a month at an inn in an adjoining village. His opportunities, however, of acquiring a knowledge of general business and the ways of the world were not facilitated very much, the cases brought before the Bench being of a trivial nature; if they did chance to get hold of a sheep-stealing case it was considered a grand thing, and afforded a theme of conversation at the various local dinner-parties

up to the time of the assizes, when of course it became necessary to go and hear the case tried by one of her Majesty's judges, with an array of counsel, all in their wigs and gowns. Their speeches, the examination of the witnesses, and any jokes made in court afforded a grand fund of amusement for some time afterwards. The stupidity of the western agricultural witness, I suppose, somewhat exceeded that of other districts, and hence drew from one of the judges at the assizes on the Western Circuit the remark that the farther he went west the more convinced he was that the wise men came from the east.

I have rather wandered from Young Green, and been somewhat diffuse in the history of his father in order to account for his excessive simplicity in the matter of business in which it will appear he was concerned, and hence I have adopted for him the name of *Very* Green.

As nearly as I can tell, about the year 1834 Young Green was in a wine-merchant's counting-house, at the West End of London. Being much of my own age, fond of coaching, and distantly connected, we were a good deal together, and thus I became acquainted with the dilemma into which he quite unintentionally led his father.

At the period I have referred to there were no Civil Service competitive examinations, and men who

had good interest only could get into excellent Government situations. A pecuniary consideration, *sub rosa*, frequently formed an important element in obtaining an appointment; but being illegal, the transactions required to be conducted with great tact and some mystery.

It happened that occasionally advertisements appeared in the newspapers somewhat enigmatically worded, but nevertheless sufficiently clearly intimating that the advertiser was in a position to obtain a Government situation for anyone disposed to render it worth his while.

A shady individual, who passed by the designation of 'Ensign'—I forget the exact name—lived in London, and, as his subsequent history disclosed, seemed to subsist by getting hold of young men with money, some of which he managed to obtain by card-playing, gambling, bills of exchange, etc., not omitting the plan of advertising in the manner I have mentioned, without, however, having the slightest power to carry out his part of the bargain.

Not having a very lucrative position as clerk in the wine-merchant's counting-house, Young Green was on the look-out to what is usually called 'better himself,' and thus he chanced to hit upon the Ensign's advertisement in one of the daily papers. Perhaps it

is needless to say that it was highly coloured, and held out very bright prospects to any young man desirous of getting into a good permanent situation under Government. Entertaining this opinion, Young Green communicated with the Ensign, and eventually had an interview with him, when he made himself thoroughly acquainted with the position of the reverend parent, especially as to his ability to stump up the amount which might be requisite to carry out the transaction. A country clergyman with good means, and living in a quiet little village upwards of 100 miles from London, where he had scarcely ever been, was just the subject that the Ensign thought he could operate upon successfully: so he told young Green that he was only acting for somebody else, whose name he was not at liberty to divulge; that being a delicate matter, and one strictly of honour between the parties, it was absolutely necessary for him to have a personal interview with the reverend gentleman, and that, therefore, Young Green had better go down, represent all the circumstances, and bring him up to town.

Feeling fully satisfied of the *bonâ fides* of the Ensign, and highly pleased with the prospects verbally exhibited by him, Young Green immediately adopted the plan proposed.

In the year 1834 there was not any railway

out of London, so that all the journey down to his father's had to be done by coach; and in order not to lose any time, he started off the same night, reaching his destination about mid-day following. The little country parish was six miles or more from any town, off the high-road, and consequently not a very accessible place. Arrived there, however, the whole story was told, including all the embellishments of the wily Ensign. The reverend gentleman accordingly was favourably impressed with it, and accompanied his son back to town, spending a whole day in travelling by the coach.

A meeting with the Ensign was arranged, but he did not intend to have any hunting in couples, so he gave Young Green to understand that all that took place must be strictly confidential, a matter of honour, and it was indispensable that his interview with the father should be quite private. Not suspecting anything wrong, this was assented to, and the meeting took place between the two only. Without difficulty the Ensign submitted such a glowing description of the appointment, and the position it would be for the son, that the reverend gentleman agreed to the terms.

'As this,' said the Ensign, 'is strictly a matter of confidence and honour, and I am only acting for somebody else, perhaps you will just give me

something that I may show him to prove that the terms are agreed to;' and he produced what appeared to be a small slip of paper, saying, 'If you just write across this "Accepted," and sign your name, that will be sufficient.'

The reverend gentleman wrote on it as requested, when the Ensign put it in his pocket, and politely took leave of his companion, who returned to his son and told him all that had taken place, concluding with the facts respecting the paper. The son, who was thoroughly acquainted with the nature of bills of exchange, was horror-struck, as he at once saw that his father had signed a paper which might be converted into a bill of exchange amounting to as much as he was worth, and that the document was in the hands of a man of whom neither of them knew anything, and who, for all that they knew to the contrary, might be a swindler.

The poor old man was nearly frantic; but it happened that he had a nephew practising as a solicitor in town, so to him he went and told the whole story. The nephew, not being conversant with criminal law, immediately went to a Mr. Harmer of Hatton Garden, at that time a noted Old Bailey lawyer, whose services were generally secured by any unhappy individual charged with a criminal offence, and having the wherewithal to pay the fees. Mr.

Harmer afterwards became the proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, and an alderman of the City of London, and had a fine residence somewhere near Greenhithe.

When the case of the Rev. Very Green had been laid before Mr. Harmer, it appeared that the Ensign was not a stranger to him, probably from his having come in contact with him on similar occasions, as he at once said the paper could be got back, but the reverend gentleman would 'have to smart for it.'

The occurrence happened at the end of the week, but there was at that time no running home by an express train to do duty in the country on Sunday and return again early on Monday morning; so the poor old man was obliged to remain in town in a state of mind more easily imagined than described.

In due course, however, the paper was, as predicted by Mr. Harmer, got back, but not without smarting for it considerably.

It only remained, then, for the reverend gentleman to take his place inside the coach and travel back again to his home.

Some time afterwards the Ensign sailed a little too near the wind, and brought himself within the meshes of the criminal law, as he was tried and convicted at the Old Bailey for some offence of cheating or fraud, and received a sentence which effectually precluded

him from having any further transactions with members of the Green family.

Had railways been in existence in those days probably the Rev. Very Green would have travelled about a little more, and become better acquainted with the world and its ways; but his journey up to London by coach was, I believe, the last he performed. At all events, he never had such an expensive one again.

As there is not much connected with coaching in the preceding narrative, perhaps it comes in appropriately in a scratch team. The next is a strictly coaching one, being a short biographical sketch of a man who was somewhat notorious in coaching-days.

The following account of him was given me by a man connected with coaching who knew him well, and on the accuracy of whose information I can rely:

Frederick Benson, at one time better known as 'Benson Tagg,' was a good singer and capital ventriloquist, and was engaged in that capacity at the Eagle Tavern, in the City Road, kept by a man named Rouse, from whom was derived the expression common about London at that time of 'Bravo, Rouse!' Probably when he got the engagement at the Eagle, Benson assumed the name of Tagg

in addition to Benson, which was his proper name. His language, by all accounts, seems to have been something horrible, as (without giving me any specimens, which I had no desire to hear) my informant in the course of conversation said, 'Well, we are all sinners, but this man's language was not fit for any decent company.'

Not being satisfied with his position at the Eagle, he seems to have taken to 'starring it in the provinces,' giving entertainments on his own account, at which he sang, conjured, and gave instances of his ventriloquial abilities; and among other places he visited Saxmundham, a town on the London and Yarmouth road. This was before the days when he became connected with coaching; but he was very glad to avail himself of the assistance of the guard of a coach, without whom his entertainment on one occasion would probably have been a failure.

Benson had had some large bills circulated about the town, announcing that Chang Laura, the celebrated Eastern conjurer (being, in fact, no other than himself), would perform; also that there would be singing and ventriloquism. The whole performance, set forth in very glowing terms, was to be carried out entirely by himself, except as regarded the music—and here was his difficulty.

He searched all over the town, but was unable to

find any local musical talent adapted to his requirements; and thus, as the hour for commencing the entertainment drew near, he found he should most likely have to get on as well as he could without music, and that the success of the evening would be entirely destroyed.

Fortunately, however, for him, an accident happened to the down night-coach from London, close to Saxmundham; the perch broke, and the coach was quite unable to proceed.

The guard, who was a good bugle-player, had to wait in the town; so Benson, hearing of this, introduced himself, and solicited his services with his bugle, offering to remunerate him on his own terms. The guard, while not unwilling to take a part, felt rather diffident in presenting himself as the whole of the orchestra, and inquired whether a performer on some other instrument could not be procured to join him—whether a harp, violin, or bass viol could not be got? But Benson related the endeavours he had been making all day, and informed him of the impossibility of procuring any second performer.

Upon the two, accordingly, devolved the whole of the evening's performances, the guard doing the instrumental and Benson the vocal and other parts.

The audience were highly delighted throughout, and the whole was a great success. It can't be said

that 'the house' was crowded, because the entertainment was given in a large room at the Bell Inn—but that was quite full. The guard was well paid, and, curiously enough, some years after worked on the same coach with Benson.

Having a fancy for some employment in connection with coaches, Benson was in the habit of frequenting the Bull and Mouth yard, and by some means or other was one of the party at the annual coaching dinner which Sherman, like other London large coach-proprietors, used to give. These dinners, however, were restricted to the coachmen and guards in the proprietors' service.

Probably from a knowledge of Benson's singing and ventriloquial talents, and his being a very good man at a dinner-party, some guard or coachman obtained leave to bring him.

Sherman was very much pleased with him at the dinner, and becoming better acquainted with him, put him on the 'Union,' a day-coach to Leicester, as guard. The coach drew up at the Peacock at Islington every evening on its arrival in London, and Benson was there with it on every alternate evening. On one of these occasions, while he was standing there, he saw two gentlemen driving by in a gig with a dog tied underneath. Immediately there was a most frightful yelping and yelling, as if the dog had

been run over. The gig was stopped, and the gentlemen got down and examined the dog, but without detecting anything the matter with him; so they patted him, got up into the gig, and drove on, but had not gone fifty yards when, judging by the hideous yelpings, the poor dog was again in dreadful agony. They again stopped, got down, and examined him, when, it becoming known to the numerous by-standers at the Peacock that Benson had performed the vocal part on behalf of the dog, they burst into shouts of laughter, amid which the gentlemen jumped up into the gig, and drove off.

After he took to coaching, Benson started a moustache, a most unusual thing in those days; but perhaps he did it in imitation of his master, Mr. Sherman, who used to wear one. He left Sherman's service for two or three years, but returned to it, and was guard on his Exeter 'Subscription' coach for some time.

Hearing there was a guard wanted on the Exeter 'Defiance,' he got put on; and here no doubt the exercise of his ventriloquial powers was a source of great amusement to his passengers, as in this instance.

The coach stopped one Saturday night at a small public-house, where a number of persons were sitting in what was called the parlour, smoking their pipes

and enjoying themselves quietly, when Benson looked in at the door, and said somebody had put a pig into his hind-boot, and it was kicking up a precious row. Pipes were at once laid down, and several persons adjourned to the coach to see this noisy specimen of the porcine tribe. Benson had got round to the far side of the hind-boot, where he imitated the squeaking and grunting of the pig most vigorously. How to get a sight of the animal without letting him escape seemed to puzzle the company, because as soon as the hind-boot door was touched, or any attempt to open it was made, the pig squealed louder than ever, and was apparently endeavouring to push its way out. This induced from the lookers-on various cautions, such as, 'Take care!' 'Mind what you're at!' 'He'll get out and bolt!' etc.

As the coach was just starting, Benson unlocked and opened the door, when they said, 'Lor', there bain't never no pig there!'

Benson burst out laughing, slammed the boot door, ran after the coach, and jumped up, greatly to the amusement of his passengers.

He was a man of most violent temper, and cared little on whom or what he vented it. One night he got to the front of the coach somewhere near Basingstoke, and was hitting one of the wheelers with a short chain. Whether he was on the footboard or

the splinter bar, or was kicked, is not known; but his leg was broken, and he had to be taken into a little inn close by, where he was laid up for some months.

Thus ends Benson's history as communicated to me by a man personally acquainted with him; but curiously enough there came into this man's hands a small printed tract of some seven or eight pages, containing an account of Benson as given by himself from time to time during his last illness. At the heading of the tract is a small picture of a stage-coach, and it is called

'THE PROFANE COACHMAN'S CONVERSION.'

I purpose only giving some portions of the tract relating to the man's history while connected with coaching. To enter into the other parts of it would be inappropriate and quite unconnected with the subject of this book.

It will be observed that Benson's character as given by himself quite agrees with that of my informant. The tract runs as follows:

'Mr. B. was the son of respectable parents in Yorkshire, who desired to train him to some useful business. His love for horses, however, and the temptations therewith connected, made him break through all home restraints; and before he was

twenty years old he became the driver of one of the mails in the north of England, which was especially noted for its fast travelling. For nearly twenty years he was connected with the largest coaching establishments, and usually went in and out of London, either as coachman or guard. It may be well to mention here that his figure was tall and commanding, his countenance intelligent and prepossessing, and his mental powers far above mediocrity. He had also considerable talent for music, being known as the best bugle-player on the road, besides which he had a very fine voice, which was well cultivated. He also excelled as a ventriloquist, and was in the habit of giving public exhibitions in this character. During the whole of this period of his life, and up to the last three months, his liveliness, gaiety, and consequent popularity were only exceeded by his reckless impiety. He has mentioned that for many years he had seldom spent less than from eight to twelve shillings daily in the purchase of intoxicating liquors. Thus, as might naturally be expected, a constitution which appeared originally calculated to bear the changes of a long life was worn out before he had reached his prime. An accident which occurred near Basingstoke when he was about forty years old laid him aside for several weeks with a compound fracture; his recovery at that time was very doubtful, and he

never afterwards regained his former strength. With bodily infirmity, irritability of temper and all its sad consequences became painfully prominent in his character; so much so that (to use the words of one well acquainted with him) if you did anything to offend him there was nothing but to get out of his way as fast as possible—whatever was near him was sure to be dashed at the offender.

'A gentleman who travelled with him not long before his fatal sickness says: "He was commonly called by his companions 'Fred.' He was indeed extensively known, and his liberality and generosity had gained him many friends. Fond of gay and merry company, able to sing a good song, and possessing a fund of good-humoured jokes, he was a general favourite, though at times his language was such as to shock the ears even of his most intimate acquaintances. It is now somewhere about three years since, seated by his side on the coach-box, I took a journey with him along the road from Exeter to Sidmouth; and as the horses toiled up a tedious hill, I was obliged to listen to his oft-repeated curses upon them, and to witness the severe way in which he punished the poor animals in order to quicken their speed, wearied as they were with their long pull. I could not refrain from seriously remonstrating with him upon his conduct. He seemed to pay but little

if any attention to what I said, and went on much as before, apparently in a kind of sullen doggedness of spirit, urging on his horses, regardless of my expostulations.

'"At length his health gave way altogether, and when I first saw him he was the victim of advanced consumption. I found him in the back parlour of an inn, vainly seeking amusement and happiness in reading novels of the worst description. I endeavoured to bring every means to bear on the relief of his sufferings, and I soon gained his entire confidence. On my second visit I left a tract on his bed, which he appeared to receive respectfully, though I heard that he afterwards expressed himself as having felt insulted; indeed, he was so angry and offended at having a tract given to him, that he gnashed his teeth in rage, and determined to tear it to pieces directly I left the room.

'"In one of our conversations, speaking of himself, he said: 'I was one of the biggest blackguards that ever stepped,' which was one of his forcible expressions."

'The sufferings of poor B.,' the narrative continues, 'were varied and severe,' and shortly afterwards terminated his existence somewhere about the year 1845.

A curious circumstance happened to a man

named Fred Guyer, who was a guard on the 'Wellington,' a coach which ran from the Bull and Mouth to Newcastle-on-Tyne. At the different coaching-yards there was generally an odd man or two about who would go on any little errands for the guards or coachmen, and one of these was employed by Guyer, who, having bought at York what he was told was a wild fox, brought it up to London, and sent it in a sack by the odd man at the Bull and Mouth, to a man in Leadenhall Market, to whom he sold it. The purchaser, however, had not had it very long before he discovered that it was evidently a tame fox, and he afterwards complained that Guyer had sold him a tame instead of a wild one.

At another time Guyer bought two more foxes, having told the purchaser that he could get two more, which the man said he would buy. They were to be brought up in sacks, tied under the hind axle-tree of the coach; but in the course of the journey up, Guyer saw a fox running across a field near the road, and called the attention of the coachman and passengers to it, regretting at the same time that there were not any hounds there that they might see a run. It never occurred to Guyer that this was one of his foxes; but on arriving at the Bull and Mouth he found only one, and it reminded

him of the fox he had seen running across the field, which was one of his own escaped. The other, however, was to be sent to Leadenhall; and in order that there might be no complaint of its being tame, like the one previously purchased, the plan was adopted of giving it several cuts with a stick while in the bag, which had the desired effect, as when taken out in the purchaser's room, it bolted all about the place, and fully established its character for wildness.

These foxes were conveyed without causing any quarrel or dispute with anyone; but it was otherwise with a gentleman who was going down grouse-shooting by the Leeds 'Courier' from the Belle Savage, and had his dog on the footboard with him. The coach was driven between Northampton and Nottingham by two men, Dick Evans and Bob Bennett, one up and the other down. Bennett was a rough, uncouth sort of man, and when the coach came down, and he saw the dog on the footboard, he asked whose it was. 'Mine,' said the gentleman, who was a captain. Bennett said he wasn't going to let the dog be there, and he'd have it off; when the captain let him understand that if he interfered with the dog in any way he'd give him a thrashing. Somehow or other, when they got to Loughborough, matters came to a crisis, and they had a set-to. Bennett was floored

three times in succession as soon as he got up, when he ran into the house and expressed his willingness to do anything the captain wished rather than be punished any more. The captain said he should not go on with the coach until Bennett had apologized, which he was only too ready to do, as advised by the proprietor, to whom he had appealed for protection.

One of the guards on this coach was the first to take a newspaper containing the news of the passing of the Reform Bill into Leeds, where he sold it for a guinea, and two others he sold in Nottingham on his way down for ten shillings each.

I think I have now started a scratch team of four stories, which I can safely assert have never been put together before.

CHAPTER XVII.

BRISTOL COACHING INNS.

Bristol was a great place for coaches; being connected extensively with the shipping-trade, the arrivals and departures of persons engaged in mercantile business were numerous. Devonport, Plymouth, Manchester, Liverpool, and many large manufacturing towns, had direct and considerable communication with Bristol, so it is not surprising to find that there were three or four large coaching inns in the town, carrying on a brisk and active business. Perhaps it would be difficult to know to which the first place should be assigned, or which carried on the largest business; but in coaching, the inns that had the mails generally found that they drew other passengers to the establishment.

In Bristol the inn from which the London mail started was the Bush, Townsend being the proprietor. Many other coaches also went from it.

The next in amount of coaching business, I should

say, was the White Lion, of which Isaac Niblett, a large coach-proprietor, was the owner. It is now converted into a joint-stock company's hotel, and so altered that I doubt if it could be identified either externally or internally with the old inn, which was formerly kept by Sir Thomas Lawrence's father, who afterwards removed to the Bear at Devizes, where he failed. This was his last speculation in hotel-keeping, which ruined him, and consequently people used to say, 'It was not the Lion but the Bear that eat him up.'

There was also the Plume of Feathers, from which some coaches ran, but not so many as from the two inns I have mentioned.

Another large coaching inn, which, although I mention it last, was not, I suppose, the least, perhaps remains more in the condition it was in during coaching-days than any of the others. If any inn is entitled to the appellation of old, this certainly is. It has been carried on under its present name for nearly a century and a half; but there are records of its having been an inn for some two or three centuries previously. I think the old coaching bill, setting forth the coaches that used to start from it, should not be omitted. It is as follows :

RUMMER HOTEL.

Royal Mail and General Coach Office, High Street, Bristol.

John Bland begs most respectfully to return his sincere thanks to his friends and the public for the very liberal support with which they have been pleased to favour him, and also to direct their attention to the following list of

COACHES AND VANS

which leave the above office, at very reduced fares, assuring them that no exertion on his part shall be wanting to merit a continuance of that decided preference which he has hitherto experienced.

Birmingham Royal Mail, every evening at 7.30 o'clock.*
Gloucester " " " "
Tewkesbury " " " "
Worcester " " " "
Bromsgrove " " " "
Manchester and Liverpool Royal Mail, every evening at 7.30 o'clock.

The above mail arrives in Birmingham in time for the first-class train to Manchester and Liverpool at six a.m.

London (no fees).—The New Company's elegant light four-inside post-coaches, every morning at half-past six o'clock, and the Castle and Ball, Bath, at eight o'clock, to the New White Horse Cellar and Bull and Mouth, St. Martin's-le-Grand, at half-past eight o'clock in the evening.

Fares—inside, £1 16s.; outside, 18s.

Dine at the King's Head, Thatcham, 2s. 6d. a head.

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* Of this mail I have a vivid recollection, as on it I passed the first night's travelling I had in my life; but it was in the opposite direction, being from Birmingham to Bristol. The direct Bristol and Liverpool mail was put on a few years afterwards, and did not go by way of Birmingham, but through Monmouth, Hereford, Ludlow, and Shrewsbury.

Route—Bath, Chippenham, Calne, Marlborough, Newbury, and Reading.

London (no fees).—New Company's night-coach, every afternoon at half-past one o'clock, and the Castle and Ball, Bath, to the New White Horse Cellar, and Gerrard's Hall, Basing Lane, early the following morning.

Fares—inside, £1 4s.; outside, 14s.

Supper at the King's Head, Thatcham, with tea or coffee, 2s. a head.

Route—same as day-coach. Luggage allowed to each passenger—inside, fifty pounds; outside, thirty pounds.

☞ Booking-offices in London—Gerrard's Hall, Basing Lane; Bull and Mouth, St. Martin's-le-Grand; and White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly.

Exeter, Plymouth, and Devonport.—'Nonpareil,' mornings at seven o'clock.

☞ The proprietors flatter themselves this coach will be found on trial one of the best conveyances in the kingdom. It changes horses at very short stages, and stops at the first-rate houses on the road. Coachmen of approved skill and character have been selected for it, and the arrangements altogether are of the very first description.

Barnstaple.—'The Western Hero,' mornings at eight o'clock, arriving at Pearce's Fortescue Hotel at seven o'clock in the evening. Same coach and coachmen throughout.

The hours at which this coach has been arranged to leave both ends are particularly calculated to suit the convenience of the mercantile world. Every possible attention has been paid in the arrangements to make it deserving of public patronage.

	MORNINGS.	AFTERNOONS.
Marlborough - - -	6.30	1.30
Newbury - - -	,,	,,
Reading - - - -	,,	,,

MORNINGS.

Exeter 'Nonpareil' -	7.0	Honiton 'Magnet' -	8.30
Plymouth „ - -	„	Wells „ - -	„
Devonport „ - -	„	Langport „ - -	„
Cheltenham 'Favourite'	9.45	Ilminster „ - -	„
Gloucester „ -	„	Alcester (opposition	
Worcester „ -	„	coach*) - - -	9.0
Oxford „ -	„	Poole 'Phœnix' - -	6.45
Hereford 'Tiger' - -	„	Minehead 'Speculator' -	9.0
Ross „ - -	„	Bridgewater „ -	„
Sarum 'Star' - -	8.30	Stowey „ -	„
Weston-super-Mare 'Vic-		Cannington „ -	„
toria' - - -	9.0	Williton „ -	„
Southampton 'Star' -	8.30	Washford „ -	„

AFTERNOONS.

Bridgewater 'John o'Groat'	3.30	Weston-s.-Mare 'Magnet'	4.0
Taunton „	„	Clevedon 'Thistle'	„

EVENINGS.

Manchester 'Criterion' - - -	7.30
Liverpool „ - - -	„
Chester „ - - -	„

MORNINGS.

Teignmouth 'Nonpareil'	7.0	Dawlish 'Nonpareil'	7.0
Torquay „	„	Warminster 'Star' -	„

AFTERNOONS.

Frome 'Pilot' - -	2.45	Calne 'Hope' - -	3.45
Chippenham 'Dove' -	„	Devizes „ - -	3.15

Spring-vans at waggon prices.

Great Western Railway—fly-vans daily from Bland's Warehouse, Broadmead.

The following is the time of the arrival and departure of the

* The above coach is the only direct conveyance without change of coach or coachman on the road.

vans: Start from Bristol at two o'clock, afternoons; arriving at the Bull and Mouth, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London, in twenty-eight hours. Start from the Bull and Mouth, evenings, at seven o'clock; arriving in Bristol the following night at eleven o'clock.

Birmingham Fly Van—every afternoon, at half-past four o'clock, to Haine's and Bland's Van Office, Moor Street, Birmingham, in twenty-eight hours. Leaves Birmingham, every afternoon, at half-past seven o'clock, in connection with the Grand Junction Railways, for goods to all parts of the north.

Gloucester and Cheltenham Van — every afternoon, at four o'clock, to Haine's Coach and Van Office, High Street, Cheltenham, in thirteen hours. Leaves Cheltenham, every afternoon, at four o'clock.

Oxford Van—every afternoon, at half-past four o'clock, to Beeseley's Office, Jesus College Lane, in one day.

Manchester and Liverpool, and all parts of the north, at twelve o'clock.

Spring vans and waggons may be always engaged for the removal of furniture and luggage to any part of the kingdom.

Mourning-coaches, hearses, etc.

JOHN BLAND,
Proprietor.

One of the fly vans in the above list to London, it will be seen, went to the Bull and Mouth, kept by Sherman; and an old sharing account shows what was the rate of earnings per mile in one of these concerns. It will be sufficient to quote the totals without setting out in detail the daily earnings up and down.

The name of Bland does not appear in the account, but that of Lush—well-known as a carrier in the West of England in a large way of business—does. It

might have happened that Sherman was working one van concern with Bland and another with Lush, in like manner as he worked several coaches on the same road with different sets of partners, whose principal object it always was to run to a proprietor's house in London having a large connection.

SETTLEMENT OF VANS, FOURTEEN DAYS, DUE 27TH JUNE, 1837.

	£	s.	d.
Receipts - -	119	15	8
Disbursements -	56	2	8
Divided by 123 miles at 10s. 4d. Surplus, 2s.	63	13	0

	Shares. M.	£	s.	d.
Mr. Sherman	36	18	12	0
Mr. Hammond	29⅓	15	3	1
Mr. Hunt	22	11	7	4
Mr. Lush	35⅔	18	8	7
		63	11	0

The sharing in a van concern was totally different from that of a coach, so that one cannot well be compared with the other with a view of seeing which paid best; but the wear and tear of the stock working vans would be much less, according to the well-known adage that 'It's the pace that kills.' Horses for working in vans, too, would not be so expensive in the first instance, very likely, as those required for the fast and fashionable day-coaches. What were called the 'Fly Vans,' however, did not travel all the way at a walking-pace, like the old broad-wheeled waggons, and hence the appellation of fly vans. It will have been noticed that in Bland's advertisement

sheet they are stated to occupy a period of twenty-eight hours only in performing the journey from Bristol to London, so that with their stoppages on the road —which must have taken a considerable time for changing horses and loading and unloading goods— they must, when in actual motion, have travelled at the rate of five or six miles an hour; and I don't suppose the broad-wheeled waggon exceeded four, if, indeed, it did so much.

The proprietors did not lay themselves out for the conveyance of passengers by the broad-wheeled waggon; if they did carry any for a remuneration, and the pace exceeded four miles an hour, they were liable to the duty for carrying passengers, which it would have been scarcely worth their while to pay, and there were plenty of persons on the look-out to inform against them if they carried passengers without a license.

Among the things one used to see on the old roads were these indispensable and most useful ponderous broad-wheeled waggons, with their teams of eight or ten horses; they conveyed the greater part of the goods which were too large and heavy even for the night-coaches. The trade, however, was only partially carried on by them where there was water-carriage, either by barges or canal boats, running almost parallel with the road. For removal of furniture the

stage-waggon was generally brought into requisition, there being in those days none of the furniture-removing vans of which there is now an ample supply almost everywhere, and which from their internal arrangements obviate so much of the packing that was absolutely necessary for goods carried in the stage-waggon. Added to these increased advantages in packing, is the comfort derived from the speedy transmission of furniture, the vans, whenever the goods have to be carried a long distance, such as seventy or eighty miles, or more, being put on a railway truck, and moved the whole distance in the course of the night; whereas by the stage-waggon, travelling about four miles an hour or less, with stoppages of a day and a night, and proportionately longer times according to the distance, a journey of equal length would occupy in many cases more than a week.

For heavy goods, but not of the most bulky description, a species of intermediate conveyance existed in the shape of Pickford's vans, which travelled at a trotting pace with four horses, but did not carry any passengers. They were much the same shape as an omnibus, but considerably larger, and in addition to being filled inside with packages, carried some on the top. Vehicles of this description ran upon a good many roads.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACCIDENTS.

How accidents to coaches sometimes occurred through what I will charitably call the indiscretion of the coachman, the following narrative will sufficiently show. I would first observe that from the constant stoppages, not only at the end of the different stages, but also at numerous intermediate public-houses, in the days when, comparatively speaking, no coaches were fast, the coachman was in a state of almost continuous imbibition from the commencement to the termination of his journey.

Invitations to 'take something' were given to him by some of the passengers whenever the coach stopped, in addition to some probably before starting, and thus it cannot be wondered at if he became reckless in his driving, or incapable of managing his horses.

An old coachman on the North road, who used to drive from London down to the village of Redbourn, four miles beyond St. Albans, and remain

there until the up-coach from Birmingham arrived in the evening, when he drove it up to London, had a long day on his hands at the quiet little place where there was nothing either to occupy or amuse him. How were the many hours he would have to remain waiting for the up-coach to be disposed of?

The place being a great thoroughfare on the road to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield, etc., the mails to those places, with many other coaches, changed horses there, and it might be called a depôt for horses and horse-keepers, consequently the inhabitants consisted chiefly of publicans, and a few small shopkeepers and tradesmen. Many other coachmen stopped there, but none so long as himself, as the coach he drove was the first down in the morning, and the last up at night, and at first he felt the vacant time a great inconvenience. Eventually, however, he got over this, as it happened that he made some acquaintances in the neighbourhood, and amongst them a farmer who was one of Lord Verulam's tenants. From this person he received an invitation to dinner, which he accepted, and we give his own account of how the day was spent. After the cloth was removed the bottle was circulated, and he failed to perceive that the good old port, of which his host was by no means sparing, was likely to make an

impression on him. The farmer wishing, as he supposed, to mark the favour he considered the coachman had done him by partaking of his hospitality, and knowing that his time for returning to London was approaching, finished the entertainment with two bottles of excellent claret, requesting the coachman not to hurry himself, as he would drive him in his own gig to Redbourn, a distance of little more than a mile. Nothing loth, as the coachman said, he followed the suggestion, and swallowed glass after glass with considerable gusto. He then got into the gig which was waiting at the door, but soon became conscious that he had overstepped the bounds of prudence; he was, however, in full possession of his senses, and had no fear of being unable to keep his balance.

Arriving at the inn at Redbourn where the coach changed horses, he found the horses put to, and the passengers all seated. The proprietor, who lived there, looked very serious, and the coachman who had brought the coach up was standing by his side, with an ominous smile upon his face.

Considering silence most discreet, without saying a word he took hold of the reins, and mounted without any difficulty, determined, as he thought, to be doubly particular and careful. According to the usual arrangement, he pulled up at St. Albans for a

minute or two, but was sufficiently wide awake not to get off the box, being, as he said, afraid to trust himself, as he began to feel more and more the effects of the quantity, as well as the quality, of the wine he had taken. They then proceeded very steadily and well to the top of Ridge Hill, a long hill about half-way between St. Albans and Barnet; and from thence, the worst part of the stage being over, the horses were accustomed to go the last four miles at a faster pace, consequently he put them on a little, and passing through the turnpike gate at South Mimms, and being all very fresh (including himself), he thought they would like a gallop, so after leaving the village, and going down a little descent on to a part of the road called the Wash, he sprang them.

He did not say when this occurred, but it must have been very many years since, and when he was quite a young man, as among the many improvements made in the Holyhead road was diverting it from the Wash, so as to avoid the dangers and delays occasioned by the floods which occasionally occurred there, and gave the locality its name.

To continue the narrative of the coachman who had just sprung his horses. The fence on his off-side being very high, he didn't observe the Manchester 'Cobourg' coach coming round the corner at about eight or nine miles an hour; he himself was going at

J. Sturgess del. et lith

PASSENGERS WHO SAT STILL WERE UNHURT

about double that pace. Just before the coaches got to the turn they met; his leaders flew out of the road in an instant, and over a small ditch on to a bank by a lodge with a white gate leading to a house then occupied by the Duke of Leeds. The carriage-road extended from the lodge into the turnpike road, and was marked by two white posts. Inside the first his horses passed, but the sudden jerk in crossing the ditch threw him off. He lay on his back in the road, and for a moment saw the coach falling on him; but the body of the coach having struck the post, and the hind wheel having spanned the ditch, it righted, and with the force from the rate they were going at broke down the other post, regained the road in safety, and the horses were stopped just as they reached the bridge over the Wash—a most miraculous escape, as he said, for him.

The passengers who sat still were unhurt; but one gentleman in jumping off the hind part of the coach sprained his ankle, and, suffering from pain and fright, insisted upon being conveyed to London in a post-chaise. One or two others accompanied him, at which the coachman said he could not help observing that there was generally one troublesome customer among the passengers when anything occurred, and he was always sure to be a member of the legal profession. Altogether, he thought himself well off

in having only to pay for the post-chaise, and the injury done to the off-leader of the Manchester 'Cobourg,' his shoulder having been lacerated to such an extent as to render him useless by coming in contact with the other coach.

Altogether, the coachman said this indiscretion on his part cost him twenty pounds, an inconsiderable sum compared with what might have happened; but it was sufficient to make him resolve never to run such a risk again, a resolution to which in his long subsequent connection with coaching he strictly adhered.

Probably this was the reason of his not meeting with any other accident, in consequence of which he acquired the confidence of the proprietors and the public; and in this he said he considered himself very fortunate, accidents being frequent. Two of them he witnessed—one to the Manchester 'Cobourg,' the other to the Liverpool 'Umpire;' and of the former he gave this account:

On the up-journey between Redbourn and St. Albans he met the 'Cobourg,' the driver of which, a man named Foster, kept on the wrong side of the road to avoid the gravel, which was so heaped up as to raise the middle of the road to an unnecessary height. The 'Cobourg' was heavily loaded on the top with luggage as well as passengers, so much so

as to raise the centre of gravity above its proper position; and although he kept on his wrong side in order that Foster might not have to cross, the latter being unaware of his intention endeavoured to do so, when the coach swayed over on the off-side, and fell with a loud noise, which, he said, reminded him of his own overturn in Bere Forest, of which, by-and-by, I must give his own account, merely observing here that it occurred prior to his collision with the 'Cobourg' at South Mimms, and so does not show that he had broken through his resolution formed after that event.

The upsetting of the 'Cobourg' was early in the evening, and in moonlight. Fortunately no one was hurt; the only cries heard were those of a woman bewailing the loss of her child. It had been in her arms fast asleep, and she had been sitting on the off-side of the roof when the coach went over; and then it could not be found.

Fearing the child might be under the coach, they made every exertion to get it up; but before they could manage this, had to undo the luggage-straps, and get the loading off the roof. This, together with getting the coach up, was soon accomplished; but luckily there was no child, for had it been there it must have been completely crushed.

Presently some one thought he heard a feeble

cry, and on looking round he saw the bundle of white clothes in which the child was enveloped lying under the fence or hedge. The rush of the distracted mother, and the joy with which she clasped her child in her arms, the coachman said had never been erased from his memory.

Seeing that there was no further harm done, and that the 'Cobourg' people had only to reload their coach, he wished them 'Good-night,' and proceeded with his own coach on his journey up to London.

Of the accident to the Liverpool 'Umpire,' the old coachman gave this account:

It occurred in the winter, when, owing to an obstruction in the road below Dunstable, occasioned by a heavy fall of snow, four or five coaches started together from Redbourn. They all went at a pretty good pace—not racing*—and passing each other only at the different changes.

In this way they proceeded to the Green Man at Finchley, where they pulled up, and of course, according to the almost universal custom, had some-

* There was not much racing in the ordinary pace of the 'Umpire,' as it was timed at less than eight miles an hour, being allowed just ten hours more than the mail; but on the 'Umpire's' time-bill was this curious note: 'If the time is not strictly kept (accidents excepted), the passengers are particularly requested not to give the coachman and guard their usual perquisite.' I presume that no coachman or guard ever showed a time-bill to a passenger.

thing to drink. He then fancied that a man named 'Humpy,' either from the name of the coach he drove (the 'Umpire'), or from a hump on his back, had already had some glasses too many, as he was very noisy.

The journey being resumed again, the two Manchester coaches started first, followed by the 'Umpire,' Humpy shouting and hallooing at the top of his voice, as, indeed, he had been doing almost all the way from St. Albans. So suspecting something would happen, the old coachman kept behind; and on going up the hill out of the bottom, he could just see one of the three coaches close to the fence opposite a public-house called the Bald-faced Stag. On reaching the spot he saw a coach lying on its side, the luggage scattered all about the road, the fore-part of the coach broken, and a perfect wreck, but the horses standing quietly. He pulled up, and proceeded a few yards on foot with some of the people from the public-house. He then found that the coach was the Liverpool 'Umpire.' Some of the passengers were bewailing their bruises, and others swearing and condemning the conduct of Humpy, who lay on his back in the road, perfectly helpless, like a large black beetle, moaning and groaning most hideously, and certainly more injured than anyone else. Being unable to stand, they carried him into

the public-house. A doctor was soon in attendance, who considered it best that Humpy, in accordance with his own wish, should be taken home as soon as possible; therefore, as the coach from Redbourn passed his lodgings in St. John's Street, he was put into it, leaving his horses and the disabled 'Umpire' coach to the care of the guard, some of the passengers riding up with the Redbourn coach, which deposited Humpy safely at his home. He ultimately recovered, and resumed his seat on the box, notwithstanding his gross misconduct, but he always went hopping to the end of his days. Some part of the coach had fallen upon him, and dislocated, or materially injured, his hip-joint. The real cause of the accident was supposed to be his having his leaders' reins wrongly placed between his fingers, which was done when he took them from his box-passenger in his hurry to start without properly arranging them. In going round the bend in the road by the Bald-faced Stag, when he found himself too near the fence, he pulled the wrong rein, which caused his leaders to hug the fence, and the front wheel striking against it, overturned the coach into the road.

In order to guard against the probability of an accident occurring from the coachman taking the reins in wrong order from the box-passenger, a gentleman who frequently rode with the old coach-

man used, on returning him the reins when he got up again, to separate them, and say, 'There are your leaders, and there are your wheel-horses.'

As I have referred to the accident which happened in Bere Forest to the old coachman, I will give his account of it, and some other recollections of his coaching-days.

It happened, he said, that when he was driving on the Portsmouth road, there were two other day-coaches on it; but as they left Portsmouth at different hours, there was no fear of their coming in contact. With the down-coaches it was different, as from their leaving London by different routes, and from other circumstances, such as stopping or not stopping to dine, they would sometimes in the middle of the journey all get together, as they did one day when, on returning, he overtook the other coaches at the Anchor Inn at Liphook, where they changed horses and dined. The coachmen asked him what time he intended to get to Portsmouth that evening, to which he replied, 'Much about the same as usual,' and he then left. They also were ready to start; and while he was changing horses about half a mile farther down the village, they passed at a good swinging pace, looking round as much as to say, 'Come along!' Having a team of four nearly thoroughbred horses, he was soon after them, and

saw his two opponents, one a little in advance of the other, fully a mile ahead, and apparently going very fast; so he immediately put his horses into a gallop, and the road being rather narrow in places, he began to consider where it would afford him a good opportunity to pass them.

He overtook the 'Regulator' first of all, as it was going up the hill out of the village of Rake, and passed it easily; the other coach, called the 'Hero,' he could see about half a mile before him, and knowing he had the best team, he followed at full speed. Being lightly loaded, the only passenger, a soldier, at the back of the coach, was tossed up and down like a shuttlecock from a battledore, so that the old coachman continually looked back to see if he kept his place.

At the top of Sheet Hill he overtook the 'Hero,' and they went down the hill side by side; and when near the bottom they met a post-chaise, the driver of which stared with astonishment, and pulled into the bank to let them pass.

A turnpike being just ahead, the old coachman pulled in a bit, or, as he said, he did not know what the consequences might have been; but knowing the horses in the 'Hero' must be nearly beaten, he looked for a place on the opposite hill, where he thought he could easily pass. On reaching the hill his leaders

J. Stanges . del. et lith.

Hanhart imp

PULLED HIS HORSES ACROSS LEADERS DRIVING THEM UP A STEEP BANK.

were by the front wheel of the 'Hero,' when the driver pulled his horses right across the old coachman's leaders' heads, driving them up a steep bank in which the off fore-wheel of his coach stuck; fortunately for him, no strap, trace or buckle was broken; but the delay prevented his getting beyond the hind-boot of the 'Hero,' when it stopped at Petersfield. According to the watch of a gentleman on the box, the distance of eight miles had been done in a few seconds over twenty minutes.

The correctness of this, however, I take the liberty of doubting, inasmuch as it far surpasses any of the times of coaches on the first of May, when they performed some extraordinary feats in order to see the shortest time in which they could accomplish their journeys; but none of them got up even to twenty miles an hour, while the pace of the 'Hero' and its opponent is said to have been twenty-four. Three of the horses in the 'Hero' never came out of the stable again.

The only result, however, of this race between the two coaches was a complaint by the proprietors to the coachmen. The occurrence, like many others of a similar kind, was remembered only as an extraordinary feat, and things went on pretty well till the middle or latter end of January, when there was a rime frost, accompanied by a thick fog, which

increased as the evening advanced, and the coach entered the Bere Forest. The coachman's attention being diverted by the continual conversation of his box passenger, all at once he found the coach off its balance on his side, and to restore it he whipped the off-wheel horse, when he heard, as he described it, a noise like the report of a cannon, and found himself on his back in the road. He jumped up in an instant, and soon sufficiently recovered his senses to find that he was not hurt, but the coach was upset.

There were four young ladies inside, all of one party, sound asleep when the accident occurred, and they innocently asked what was the matter; not, however, in the language of the Quaker, who, under somewhat similar circumstances, wishing to know if anything was wrong with the harness, inquired: 'Aileth the leather conveniency anything?'

After extricating the ladies, and getting the horses disentangled, three of them were left in charge of the box passenger who had unwittingly caused the mishap, while the coachman went off on the fourth to procure assistance, which he obtained at a place about a mile and a half distant, and returned to the scene of the accident with three or four labourers and a strong cart-rope, to find, however, that the coach had been got up again, and the ladies were inside,

only waiting for the horses to be put to, that they might resume their journey.

In one part of the forest were a number of gipsies, who, it seemed, had gone to the spot where the prostrate coach was, and had got it up again. After thanking the assembled group of men, women and children, the coach proceeded, being only about an hour late.

Ruminating on the accident as the journey was resumed, it struck the old coachman that he had neglected to reward the good people who had so promptly and efficiently assisted him in his trouble; but when he came to unload the hind-boot, he found that he need have been under no uneasiness on that score, as, anticipating his forgetfulness in the hurry of getting off, the gipsies had rewarded themselves with two or three baskets of game which had been taken up at Liphook, considering probably that pheasants and hares would be a greater treat to themselves than to the persons to whom the baskets were addressed.

The old coachman said this accident had qualified him for the service of one of the oldest coach-proprietors in London, whose maxim it was never to employ a man who had not had an upset at some time, for this reason—not having had such an experience, he would not know how to get a coach up again.

It might also, perhaps, have the effect of making the driver more careful in future, especially if the accident had occurred through negligence or recklessness.

An account of a mail accident arising from fog, but on another road, and nearer London, is given by Mr. C. Ward, who was an eye-witness, and relates it to show some of the difficulties that had to be encountered in foggy weather. He says: 'We were obliged to be guided out of London by torches, seven or eight mails following one after the other, the guard of the foremost mail lighting the one following, and so on till the last. We travelled at a slow pace like a funeral procession. Many times I have been three hours going from London to Hounslow. I remember one very foggy night, instead of arriving at Bagshot (a distance of thirty miles from London, and my destination) at eleven o'clock, I did not get there till one in the morning. I had to leave again at four the same morning. On my way back to town, when the fog was very bad, I was coming over Hounslow Heath, when I reached the spot where the old powder-mills used to stand. I saw several lights in the road, and heard voices which induced me to stop. The old Exeter mail, which left Bagshot thirty minutes before I did, had met with a singular accident. It was driven by a man named Gambier; his leaders had

come in contact with a hay-cart on its way to London, which caused them to turn suddenly round, break the pole, and blunder down a steep embankment, at the bottom of which was a narrow deep ditch, filled with water and mud. The mail-coach pitched on the stump of a willow-tree that overhung the ditch; the coachman and outside passengers were thrown over into the meadow beyond, and the horses went into the ditch. The unfortunate wheelers were drowned or smothered in the mud. There were two inside passengers, who were extricated with some difficulty; but fortunately no one was injured. I managed to take the passengers with the guard and mail-bags on to London, leaving the coachman to wait for daylight before he could make an attempt to get the mail up the embankment. They endeavoured to accomplish this with cart-horses and chains. They had nearly reached the top of the bank, when something gave way, and the poor old mail went back into the ditch again. I shall never forget the scene. There were about a dozen men from the powder-mills trying to render assistance, and with their black faces, each bearing a torch in his hand, they presented a curious spectacle. This happened about 1840. Posts and rails were erected at the spot after the accident. I passed the place in 1870; they were there still, as well as the old pollard-willow stump.'

He also recounts another incident arising from a heavy fog, but unattended with anything in the way of an accident.

'I recollect a singular circumstance occasioned by a fog. There were eight mails that passed through Hounslow—the Bristol, Bath, Gloucester, and Stroud took the right-hand road from Hounslow; the Exeter, Yeovil, Poole, and "Quicksilver," Devonport (which was the one I was driving), went the straight road towards Staines. We always saluted each other when passing with "Good-night, Bill," "Dick," or "Harry," as the case might be. I was once passing a mail, mine being the fastest, and gave my wonted salute. A coachman named Downs was driving the Stroud mail. He instantly recognised my voice, and said, "Charley, what are you doing on my road?" It was he, however, who had made the mistake; he had taken the Staines instead of the Slough road out of Hounslow. We both pulled up immediately; he had to turn round and go back, which was a feat attended with much difficulty in such a fog. Had it not been for our usual salute, he would not have discovered his mistake before arriving at Staines.'

While accidents were frequently attended with serious consequences to the passengers, the same results were generally experienced by the proprietors, especially if the accident arose from any carelessness

or want of skill on the part of their coachmen, or any cause which reasonable attention or foresight might have prevented, such as defective harness, or weak or improper condition of any part of the coaches.

One instance in which the proprietors had to smart considerably was the accident which happened to the Leeds 'Express,' a coach running from the Bull and Mouth, St. Martin's-le-Grand, to Leeds, in opposition to the 'Courier,' a coach which also ran to Leeds, but started from the Belle Sauvage, on Ludgate Hill. Some distance down in the country, and towards the Leeds end of the journey, the 'Courier' stopped at the bottom of a hill for the guard to take the drag off, when the 'Express,' coming round the corner, and probably endeavouring to pass before the 'Courier' started again, by some means was upset. One of the passengers, a woman, was killed on the spot, while another had a leg broken, and was laid up for more than twelve months.

In those days there was a law by which a deodand or fine was laid upon the cause of death in cases of accident, and in this instance it was upon the coach. Altogether, the accident caused the proprietors a loss of no less a sum than fourteen hundred pounds; but opposition coaches, especially if the opposition was strong, were frequently very expensive, as

independently of running at very low, often ruinously low, fares, the wear and tear of the stock was very great.

To narrate anything like all the accidents which befell the coaches throughout the kingdom, even if one possessed the requisite information, would be very tedious for one's readers, without, so far as I am aware, any counterbalancing advantage; so I will only mention two more—one was very serious, and relates to two of the mails; the other, as to the circumstances which followed the accident, partakes rather of comedy.

In the accident to the mails, the Holyhead one was upset, and one of the passengers killed, just on the London side of St. Albans. The inquest was held at the Peahen in that town, and a verdict of manslaughter was returned against the drivers of the Holyhead and the Chester, which was the other mail. It appeared they had been racing, and one in endeavouring to pass the other on the wrong side was driven up a bank, and overturned into the road. Both coachmen were committed to gaol at St. Albans to await their trial at the next assizes for the county of Hertford, where they were visited by the son of one of the proprietors. He found them ironed like felons, of which they complained, and one wept bitterly. It struck him as being very strange

that men should be degraded as felons, when their utmost punishment, if convicted, could not exceed a twelvemonth's imprisonment; so he remonstrated with the gaoler, who, however, replied that it was so ordered by the mayor. Knowing something of that dignitary, who was a surgeon in extensive practice at St. Albans, he waited on him, but got no redress, as he said he could only in such a case refer to his legal adviser, the town clerk, and he believed the practice was quite correct. The town clerk being then waited upon, soon proved from a book containing Acts of Parliament that the degradation was sanctioned by law; consequently the men remained in irons for six months, when they were tried at Hertford, and sentenced to the utmost penalty for their offence—viz., twelve months' further imprisonment in the county gaol.

The sentence does not appear severe, considering the dreadful result of the conduct of the two drivers, who, utterly regardless of the lives of their passengers, raced against each other in the most reckless manner, the driver of the Chester mail having designedly, by crossing in front of the leaders of the Holyhead mail, forced it up the bank by the side of the road, and thus upset it. Causing instant death to one passenger, and fractured limbs to another, does not appear to be adequately

punished by one year's imprisonment; but the Grand Jury did not find a true bill on the more serious charge of murder.

The treatment of the prisoners before their trial shows that, according to the law at the time when this event happened, persons charged with a capital crime could be imprisoned for a period of six months in irons, although it might turn out upon their trial that they were innocent.

Since the year when this happened—viz., 1820—the tendency to make laws and the treatment of prisoners more humane has been considerable; amongst other changes is the establishment of winter assizes, so as to avoid keeping persons in prison for several months, who ultimately may be acquitted of the charges made against them.

Having now disposed of this sad case, I cannot do better than wind up this chapter with the other accident, to which I have referred as somewhat of a comic nature.

A coachman known as Jack Everett, who drove a day-coach on the lower ground between London and Bath, managed somehow to upset his coach, thereby breaking one of his own legs, and one belonging to a female passenger. The accident happening near Marlborough, and neither of them of course being able to walk, they were both put into a cart

upon some straw, in order to be taken to a surgeon in that place.

That Everett was not suffering any great agony from his share in the accident may be assumed from the circumstance that on the way to Marlborough he observed to his companion in the cart, who was an elderly woman, that he had often saluted a young woman, and did not see why he should not salute an old one; and thereupon he saluted his companion.

History does not relate that this led to any commotion or disturbance in the cart, or in any way interfered with the setting and recovery of the broken legs.

Enough has been said to show that in the days of coaches very serious accidents occasionally happened. So they do now. No returns exist of the killed and wounded in the coaching-days; but regular official returns are now made of such disasters, the result of which I believe is to show that, in comparison with the number of persons travelling, injuries, both fatal and otherwise, are fewer by railways than they used to be by coaches—notwithstanding the hackneyed saying of the old coachman, 'If an accident happens to the train, where are you? but if it happens to a coach, there you are!'

CHAPTER XIX.

EDINBURGH AND ABERDEEN 'DEFIANCE.'

If fast coaches were put on the roads in England for long distances, so they were in Scotland, for there was one coach in that country that for speed and good management was not exceeded, even if equalled, by the noted Manchester 'Telegraph,' which was the fastest coach in England.

The coach I allude to was the well-known 'Defiance,' originally started by Captain Barclay of Ury, and Mr. Ramsay of Barnton, both independent gentlemen. It was first put on the road in 1829, and no doubt paid well; it was well patronized, not only for its punctuality, but on account of the great attention paid to the passengers and their general comfort.

As regards the paying part of the concern, I have heard this story:

Captain Barclay was driving one day with a friend on the box, and the professional coachman just behind

him. The Captain happened to mention to the former that he had been to a sharing meeting of the coach that morning, and on his friend expressing a hope that it had been a profitable one, the Captain slapped his hand down on his coat-pocket, which sounded as if there was something bulky in it, thereby giving his friend to infer that he had received a roll of bank-notes as his share.

The joke, however, was spoilt, and the friend undeceived, by the professional chiming in with—

'It's nae joost anything but a leather horseboot his honour has in his pocket;' which was the actual fact, the Captain happening to have such an article about him.

It was not all horseboots, however, with this concern, although the owners' expenses were doubtless heavy from the good class of horses they were obliged to have, and the whole appointments being of a first-class order, not omitting the uniform of their guards —red coats with yellow collars.

Mr. Ramsay had about sixty horses in the concern. The fares were £2 10s. inside, and £1 6s. out.

The rate of travelling of the coach—which carried four in and eleven outside passengers—from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, starting from the Waterloo Hotel every lawful morning at seven, was as follows:

Stages.	Miles.	Minutes.
To Queensferry - - - - - -	10	50
Crossing do., unloading and loading coach	2	30
Breakfast - - - - - -		20
Cowden Heath - - - - -	8	45
Kinross - - - - - -	8	40
Glenfargue - - - - - -	8½	45
Perth - - - - - -	8½	40
Allison's Inn - - - - -	6½	35
Cupar - - - - - -	6½	30
Castleton - - - - - -	9	45
Forfar - - - - - -	9	45
Finhaven - - - - - -	6¼	30
Brechin - - - - - -	6¾	35
N. Water Bridge - - -	5¼	30
Lawrencekirk - - - - -	6	35
Mondices - - - - - -	7	40
Stonehaven - - - - - -	7	40
Bourtry Bush - - - - -	7	40
Aberdeen - - - - - -	8	45
Lunch on the road - - - -		10
	129¼	730

or 12 hours and 10 minutes.

The time allowed to each line of ground, Captain Barclay said, was regulated by its nature, whether hilly or otherwise. The same rate was maintained from Aberdeen to Edinburgh, only reversing the time allowed to some of the stages. About a horse a mile was required for the above rate of travelling, which with that allowance could be done with great ease and nothing like furious driving, the horses generally in a swinging trot.

The Captain once drove the Edinburgh mail throughout to London, being 397 miles, in forty-five hours and a half.

A gentleman who regularly drove this coach for some time, having been put on by Mr. Ramsay, gives a melancholy account of his visit to the locality some years after the coach had been taken off the road.

He says: 'There were no smart mails coming up Leith Street, with McIntyre or McLeod or Aldersen clearing the way with his yard of tin for the turn at the trot opposite the Waterloo. No "Defiance" with Cook's bright bugle, or Glasgow coach with Rory O'More's cornet, to wake the echoes. Sadly I turned and hobbled down a lot of steps, and took the train to Queensferry. Shade of Ramsay! shade of Jemmy Lambert! think of that! The little place had lost none of its beauty, though what will it be when the Forth is spanned by a suspension bridge with two spans, each of 1,600 feet? The nice hotel was there, as nice as ever. I looked at the old stables and the old coach-houses. There, indeed, was the change. No well-mounted harness of Sheriff and Fulton's hanging at the doors; no strapper washing a mud-splashed coach; no horsekeeper putting a "point" on to some best whip kept for the "Edinburgh end." Some half-dozen bicycles leaning

against the wall, whilst their riders were prudently refreshing themselves in the hotel preparatory to their return to Edinburgh, along perhaps the best bit of road that coach ever rattled over. I then crossed over to North Queensferry, and found a similar change of scene—a railway station instead of the smart coach, and the old stables and coach-houses falling to ruin.

'Few who remember those times, excepting as children, are now to the fore, and of those fewer still who know or care anything about the locomotion of the period.'

To revert to English roads, there were two notable country coaches—that is to say, coaches that did not run out of London—which were said to be almost as fast as the Manchester 'Telegraph.' There is no doubt, I believe, that they were the fastest country coaches in the kingdom, and there was a very strong opposition between them. They were the 'Hirondelle' and the 'Hibernia,' and ran from Cheltenham to Liverpool, the former from the Plough, and the latter from the Royal Hotel, starting at seven in the morning for the journey of 134 miles; and the time in which they did it was said to be twelve hours and a half, but I believe in fact was fourteen, which was by no means bad work, as out of this time they must

have stopped somewhere for dinner, if not also for breakfast, as they started at seven in the morning.

The 'Hirondelle' was better known among the horsekeepers and that class along the road by the name of the 'Irondevil.'

Bath and Cheltenham somewhat resembled each other in coaching affairs. They were both fashionable places, and each had a fashionable day-coach to London; that from Cheltenham being the 'Berkeley Hunt,' from the Plough Hotel, and that from Bath being the 'York House,' running from the York House Hotel. Each also had a second day-coach, starting from the same places, viz., the 'Cheltenham Magnet,' from the Royal Hotel, and the 'White Hart,' from that hotel at Bath.

There were besides other day-coaches running through each of these places, but having come from farther down the country, such as all the Bristol coaches which passed through Bath and all the Gloucester through Cheltenham; and those to whom it was not convenient perhaps to post just when they wanted to go to town, or who found the posting throughout rather too expensive, would patronize what I may call the coach of the place.

Travelling post was a somewhat expensive affair, especially if with four horses, as appears by the

account given by Lord William Lennox of the cost of a journey from London to Holyhead—264 miles—which he gives thus:

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
'Charge for four horses	38	11	4			
Post-boys	9	6	10			
Gates	9	5	1			
Ostlers	1	2	6			
				58	5	9
Expenses on the road four nights: beds, dinners, and breakfasts for two persons and one maid	5	8	0			
				5	8	0
Steamboat, Holyhead to Kingston, three passengers	3	3	0			
Carriage	2	2	0			
Shipping	0	10	6			
Lunch	0	7	6			
Steward	0	10	0			
Cabin	0	5	0			
Sailors	0	5	0			
				7	3	0
Journey, expenses, and passage—Total				70	16	9

'Now two first-class and one second by rail to Holyhead, then best cabin-fares and refreshments, about £9—a sum under the amount paid to post-boys under the old system in bygone days. Ten miles an hour, including stoppages, was about the average posting-pace, and the charge for a pair of horses, boy, ostler, and turnpikes, amounted to about

2s. a mile. Hence a journey of a hundred miles would cost £10; with four horses, £20, in addition to the tax, purchase, and wear and tear of a travelling-carriage: for to make a journey in a rattling post-chaise, a sort of dice-box on wheels, was a most miserable affair.'

CHAPTER XX.

GUARDS AND THEIR FEES.

Guards were mostly on night-coaches—mail-guards especially, as they never left the General Post Office in London until eight o'clock at night, so that for the greater part of the year it was dark even before they commenced their journeys. I fancy the principle upon which the mails were arranged by the Post-master-General throughout the country was that the correspondence should be proceeding to its destination all night, so that no time should be lost, and that, so far as practicable in large and important towns, the mails should be made up and despatched shortly after the conclusion of the usual hours of business, and by the general time of commencing business in the morning should arrive at any place not more than a hundred miles distant from London.

Guards' places on long coaches were hard work, a man being out so many hours. On the mails they were not out so long, as they did not go much above a hundred and twenty or thirty miles, unless in

journeys where the extreme points of a mail's journey were only a little over that distance, which made it too short to divide between two; otherwise, on the London and Liverpool road, or Holyhead, for instance, one guard would not take the whole distance.

The coach-proprietors, appointing their own guards, and having only the prosperity of their coaches to consider, were averse to having too many guards and coachmen for their passengers to pay, to which the passengers naturally objected, preferring, both as a matter of convenience and economy, to pay only occasionally, and for long distances.

The Postmaster-General did not in any way concern himself with the likes or dislikes of the mail-passengers, caring only not to send his guards on too long a journey, or keep them on duty for too many hours continuously, so as to run the chance of their not being active and thoroughly up to their work. Although mail-guards were strictly looked after as to the time of their starting on their journeys and arriving at the end of them, yet it sometimes happened that a man in the night, when there was no one to see what was going on, would allow the mail to lose time by either stopping at places where he ought not, or stopping longer than the proper time somewhere, in which case, if the time lost was more than the coachman could or would make up,

the guard had to make the best explanation he could of the lost time.

I have heard of two cases in which the guards, having got into such a dilemma, and being unable to think of a satisfactory excuse to offer, adopted different modes of extricating themselves.

To those who do not know how the mail-guard's timepiece was carried, I may mention that it was locked up in a small wooden box, having a circular aperture in it the same size as the face of the timepiece, which could be seen without opening the box; while there was no way of getting at the timepiece, or altering it, without opening the box, which the guard carried in his leather pouch by a strap over his shoulder, similar somewhat to those worn by railway-guards. The mail-guard's pouch and strap, however, were of plain brown leather, and underneath, next his body, was a circular hole in the pouch, through which the face of the timepiece could be seen; in order to know at any moment what o'clock it was, he had only just to lift up his pouch, and at once see the face of the timepiece.

Having thus explained the arrangement as to the timepiece, showing that the guard could not get at it to move the hands, I will mention the mode in which one guard endeavoured so to get at the timepiece as to alter it, and make it appear that he had

kept time by it; and that, if the mail was late, it was due to the timepiece having gone wrong, and misled him. He tried by inserting the point of his knife-blade in the opening of the box to pick the lock, or push it back in some way; but, unfortunately for him, before he accomplished this feat of manual dexterity the point of his knife broke off in the opening, and, being unable to get it out again, he was obliged to deliver up the timepiece with the point of the knife in it. What the result was I don't know; but I should imagine suspension for a considerable time, if not dismissal.

The other case was that of a man who had also lost time, and having to account for it resorted to a totally different plan. To bring the timepiece into pretty strong contact with the hindwheel and thus prevent its continuing to go correctly, was not a very difficult matter; nor, when delivering it up at the Post Office, to explain that, while getting up, his foot had slipped off the step, so that, falling violently against the wheel while in motion, the timepiece had got injured; but providentially the guard had just managed, by great effort, to save himself from falling under the wheel, when he must inevitably have been killed. This account I believe passed muster, but probably with a slight suspicion as to the thorough genuineness of the serious accident,

accompanied with a pretty strong caution as to its recurrence.

I should expect that exploits of this nature were very rare indeed, there being too many chances of a man being found out, in which case the consequences were so serious that I imagine it was a case of 'Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.'

Many were the commissions and little matters of business which persons at a distance from London found it convenient to get coachmen and guards to execute for them, as also the conveyance of small parcels containing money or valuable documents; their transmission as ordinary parcels, but insured, not being a plan generally adopted. Horne said they did not have one a week by the mails on an average.

Sometimes a guard would get five shillings or more for a short paragraph respecting some important event which had just happened in London, and which the newspaper editor in the country wanted to insert in the next issue of his paper; and for some legal documents called 'Answers in Chancery,' which it was desirable to be able to trace from one hand to another, they would receive as much as a sovereign for carrying them.

A guard arriving in London in the morning would have until the afternoon, or perhaps the next day,

before he left again, so that, having ample leisure for transacting any business of his own, he might earn a good deal of money, and perhaps have what was known as 'the best wheel of the coach,' which meant that it paid him better than the proprietors.

Sometimes guards who travelled through the iron country would buy a number of chain-traces, which they could get at Stafford and places in the neighbourhood for tenpence apiece, retailing them to the coach-proprietors, when they were required, at seven shillings and sixpence each; but it occasionally happened, where a chain-trace had been put on in the course of a stage, that in the hurry of changing with the mails it was not taken off, and when inquired for by the guard on the next journey, somehow or other the horsekeeper had forgotten to bring it out—and on the next occasion could not find it, supposed somebody must have taken it out of the stable, or some such excuse; in fact it reminds one of the story of the man who, having lent a frying-pan to his neighbour, and failing after repeated applications to obtain its return, instituted legal measures for the purpose of enforcing restoration. The borrower, resolved to be prepared with an answer to any case which the owner might set up, pleaded, first of all, that if he had borrowed it he had returned it; next, that he had bought it; then, that

it had been given to him; and lastly, that he had never had it at all.

Much the same was it with the chain-trace, the horsekeeper having probably sold it to some coachman or guard going up or down the road, so that the guard who originally owned it never saw it again.

Sacks or hampers of game were sometimes carried up on the mails at night, much to the profit of the guard, in this way. When they were changing, he would tell the coachman to pull up at the corner of the lane just three miles farther, on the left side of the road; and blowing the horn would be the signal for the man with whom the arrangement had been previously made, to be at the corner of the lane with the hamper or sack with direction attached—say, 'Mr. Smith, passenger to London;' the package was handed up, and the mail was off again. The word 'passenger' passed it as passenger's luggage, and prevented any unpleasant inquiries being made, and at a convenient place it was taken off the mail before it stopped at the office in London for any of the passengers to get off with their luggage.

A good deal of business was done in this mode before the sale of game was legalized by Act of Parliament, it being looked upon in the same light as smuggling. All right if you didn't get found out.

It is difficult to say what a guard travelling a long distance on a good road, such as from London to Liverpool or Manchester, would not earn in the course of a year, being out three or four nights a week, together with short fares, commissions for business, etc.

Sometimes four commercial men would come up together, taking the whole of the inside of the coach, and playing whist in order to beguile the tedium of the journey, getting the guard at divers intervals, as occasion required and opportunity offered, to procure them a bottle of sherry or other refreshment; and for the performance of this little attention he was of course not forgotten at the end of the journey. On another occasion a lady, two of whose sons were going up to London, consigned them to the care of the guard, with strict injunctions not to allow them to smoke. The coach, however, had not gone far before he found out that the youngsters were provided with an ample supply of cigars, which they produced, and, despite his remonstrances, proceeded to smoke; so finding his persuasive powers inadequate to the occasion, he accepted their offer to partake of their supply. They all smoked very comfortably together, the soothing influence of the narcotic weed no doubt quieting any qualms of conscience from which the guard might otherwise have suffered.

'I was driving down one night,' said a mail-coach-

man to me, 'and had a young swell on the box, who offered me a cigar; on my declining it just then, he told me to take off my hat, when he filled it with cigars, and I put it on again. In another instance a passenger of a similar description was travelling by the Leeds mail, which with others got snowed up at St. Albans. The passenger stood divers glasses of brandy and water to the coachman and guard; and on their explaining the impossibility of proceeding, he said: "Oh, I thought Her Majesty's mail *must* go."'

Quite a romantic event occurred in connection with a coach up from Exeter one night. It happened on what was called 'market-night,' when there was always extra loading with passengers and their parcels; and the guard, on going into the booking-office preparatory to loading his coach, saw three huge black boxes, each weighing nearly a hundred-weight, and with a large white letter, say 'A,' on it. He was struck with astonishment, and asked the book-keeper how he could have engaged to take them, and where were they to be put on the coach? in answer to which the book-keeper told him they belonged to a lady who was going by the coach, and said they were her luggage and must go. Just at that moment the guard was touched on the shoulder by some one, and on turning round, saw the lady, who,

as he expressed it, had eyes that looked through him. Being a young man, and not wholly unsusceptible to female charms, he entered into conversation respecting her luggage. She remarked that he seemed a good-natured person, and asked him to accompany her into the coffee-room, where she gave him some wine, saying that they should probably become better acquainted during the journey, and succeeded in inducing him to take her boxes. They were accordingly put up on the coach, which at the usual time started with four ladies inside, of whom the owner of the boxes was one. At more than one place on the journey, when the coach stopped for changes, the guard was told that the lady was very ill, when he went to the door, and suggested that she should have a little brandy, which he procured for her; but on arriving at a little out-of-the-way place, about one o'clock in the morning, where no medical or other assistance was procurable, her condition had become so serious that the coachman galloped over the stage as fast as he could go, in order to reach Deptford Inn. The usual time of arriving there was about two o'clock in the morning, when the house was always closed, and all the inmates in bed. It happened, however, that on this particular morning the landlord's son having passed his medical examination in London, had come down, and the event was being

celebrated, so that the house was open and the inmates were up. The lady was taken out of the coach and carried into the inn, together with a little stranger, who had come part of the journey, and had not been booked when the coach left Exeter. The presence of the medical student was most opportune, and he at once attended to the lady. Another difficulty, however, arose: the three large boxes which were on the roof, and under the other luggage, were to be taken off. In order to effect this it was necessary for the passengers to get down. This being accomplished, and the coach loaded again, it proceeded on its journey, arriving in London two hours after its time.

When it was driven into the yard a gentleman was there, who looked inside the coach, evidently expecting to meet some one; but not succeeding he made inquiry of the guard, who said if he would wait in the coffee-room he would go to him as soon as the coach was unloaded, which he did, and related the event that occurred on the journey, at which he expressed his surprise; but he went down by the earliest means available to Deptford Inn. On his next journey up, a long list of articles required was given to the guard, together with a ten-pound note to pay for them; and on a subsequent journey a similar commission was given to him.

The lady and gentleman remained at the inn

about six weeks, during which time there was a christening, both coachman and guard getting leave off for a journey in order to attend in the capacity of sponsors, one of the names of the latter being chosen as the Christian name of the little A. Besides the festivities usual upon such occasions, both coachman and guard received very handsome presents, and did much better by being a day off the coach than on it. The landlord of Deptford Inn also derived considerable benefit from the occurrence.

This same guard, as was usual at Christmas-time, had his coach loaded with oyster-barrels—common presents at that period, when oysters had not reached the present exorbitant price. Among the recipients was a gentleman in a wholesale way of business near Exeter, who was a constant passenger by the coach, and knew the guard well. Oyster-barrels seemed to have been showered down upon this gentleman by his friends and customers in London to such an extent, that in the course of two or three journeys the guard had taken down over two dozen, when it occurred to him that there must be more than the gentleman could possibly want, and that therefore he might as well have a couple of barrels for himself; so he took them home, much to the surprise of his wife, who thought he had been guilty of a bit of extravagance.

A few days afterwards he met the gentleman, and told him how he had made free with his barrels, when he quite coincided in the prudence of the step he had taken, but added, 'Why in the world didn't you take some more?'

Baskets of fish, turkeys, game, and other presents, poured in upon this gentleman in the same proportion as the oyster-barrels, but the guard did not levy any contribution on these.

Being a good bugle-player, he was put on the Cheltenham 'Rival' at a time when it was not doing very well, with a view to rendering it more attractive, and in a certain way making it better known, as the sound of the bugle, when the coach passed through each town on its journey, drew the attention of the inhabitants to it, while otherwise it might have passed quietly through the town quite unheeded.

The incomes of coachmen and guards were best known to themselves, but that they were in numerous instances handsome is beyond all doubt, and much in excess of those of many of the middle-ground proprietors. Half, and frequently whole, sovereigns as fees from noblemen, gentlemen, bankers, and merchants, and a class of passengers who could afford to pay well, together with short passengers' fares and business commissions, with perhaps

two coaches a day, nearly always full inside and out, soon mounted up to a considerable sum. One man I knew had, in the days of coaching, upwards of three thousand pounds in a bank, made, I believe, while he was a guard; but it all went, he himself going into the Fleet Prison when the money had been wasted in extravagance of various kinds. That he was on a good coach may be known from the fact that there would be sometimes seventy or eighty pounds on his way-bill before going out of the yard in London. As the coach went a long distance, the charges for parcels made up a large amount, in addition to the fares of the passengers.

Some idea may be formed of the fees guards were in the habit of receiving, from an instance which occurred on a coach running to a town not more than a hundred and forty miles from London. A young gentleman, who was a passenger to London, was furnished, as it was supposed, with ample means for paying the coachman and guard, so he was very liberal to the latter during the journey, treating him to divers glasses of brandy and water, together with many cigars. On his arrival in London, the young gentleman, evidently totally ignorant as to what was about the proper sum to give the guard, offered him a sovereign, at which,

however, he expressed himself dissatisfied, thinking no doubt the young gentleman was so unused to travelling that, by a little pressure, he would be induced to give more rather than appear mean. I am happy to say this is the only instance I have ever heard of such disgraceful conduct. Many men were very independent, and considered themselves great swells, but such was far from being the character of the general body of coachmen or guards; and speaking from a somewhat extensive knowledge of them, I have never personally met with any unpleasantness or want of courtesy and civility.

So confident were they, up to shortly within the time when the coaches began to be put on the railway-trucks out of London, that nothing could ever supersede road-travelling, that they failed to make any provision for a rainy day; and when their coaches stopped, they hung about the old coaching-inns doing nothing, some from want of qualifications, others from an unwillingness to accept positions they considered derogatory. Some of these men, being unable to get employment, dwindled down into a most deplorable condition, as happened with John Peer, a noted coachman and first-rate hand on the London and Southampton 'Telegraph.' He got down to driving a 'bus, and ultimately into a workhouse in London, when his case being made public in a

newspaper by some gentleman who had known him well, and travelled with him often in his palmy days on the 'Telegraph,' donations were solicited, and his patrons subscribed handsomely; thus the poor man was soon removed to a more comfortable locality somewhere along the road he had so often travelled, and ended his days in quiet retirement.

Many others, both coachmen and guards, when they had laid by something, took public-houses with varied success, some having done very well, though scarcely making such handsome incomes as in former days, or engaged in an occupation so congenial to their tastes as coachmanship. Others I have seen driving omnibuses in London, or to railway stations in country towns.

CHAPTER XXI.

GENERAL.

It has often struck me when looking at an excursion train containing several hundred passengers, what an immense number of persons must travel now compared with those who did so before the railways were made—allowing for the great increase which has taken place in the population, which in round numbers, according to the census, was over 13,000,000 in 1831, but in 1881 exceeded 25,000,000. I suppose that not one in a hundred of those who now travel could have been accommodated by road under the old system.

Take, for instance, one of the long third-class carriages, with six compartments, and ten persons in each, which is their number, and you have as many passengers as could be conveyed in five stage-coaches with ten outside passengers on each ; while two first-class carriages, each with their three compartments having six seats, will accommodate enough persons to fill the inside of nine coaches.

I question very much whether one only of these long trains does not convey more persons to places upwards of 150 miles from London than were taken by all the coaches and mails travelling between them in one day.

You might almost count on your fingers the number of coaches running right through daily without any change to places as far distant from London as York, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, and Exeter—all of them large towns. There were, of course, a great many intermediate coaches by which a person might travel a hundred miles or less one day, and then go on again the next—as, say, from London to Birmingham on the first day, and thence to Manchester or Liverpool, to which there were plenty of coaches, on the second day; and so with the other towns. Then again, besides the coaches, there were the various other means of getting along the road, such as in private carriages, either with their owners' horses, travelling a short distance daily, or with post-horses; all the posting, pure and simple, in the old yellow post-chaise; the commercial travellers with their 'traps,' as this was the mode of travelling almost universally adopted by them; and a host of vehicles of various sorts and descriptions. The above comprise pretty nearly all the persons who would be travelling along the main roads, except

the pedestrians, of whom there were always a goodly number.

The nearer you approached to London, the number of coaches, and naturally other conveyances as well, increased, as from Birmingham, Gloucester, and Bristol there were more than from the other large towns I have named; while approaching nearer still to town, as Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton, Oxford and Northampton, there were not only the direct coaches running between those places, but the long coaches from a greater distance, passing through some of them.

For the comparatively insignificant number of road-travellers that there used to be, ample accommodation was always provided, as even the small number of coaches running were not always full; and directly it was found that those on the road were loading fully almost daily, and doing exceedingly well, opposition or additional coaches would be put on by some one or other: so that a good coach was not very often left to remain in a state of unwonted prosperity, without any rival to share in the profits, and thus perhaps convert one well-paying coach into two, neither of which would do much good for the proprietors. So strong, however, was the spirit of rivalry among coach-proprietors, that they would keep on running against each other long after

the business was productive of benefit to any of them, no man liking to knock under and take his coach off the road.

A person who was in the habit of keeping the accounts of about thirteen coaches for the proprietors, made, with some trouble, a calculation as to the amount of duty paid in respect of each passenger in the course of a year, and the result was, that if the coach was always full, it would not exceed two shillings and a penny a head on the fare of an inside passenger for a hundred miles; but if the calculation was made upon the average number of passengers travelling throughout the year, it would then come to four shillings, and the sum paid for duty in the course of the year was not less than thirteen per cent. on the gross earnings. But he said he did not think that the amount of duties could be a fair criterion of the success of the coaching interest, because persons would keep coaches going whether they gained or lost. A strange system prevailed in the coaching interest, by which persons would put on coaches merely for the sake of putting them on, and often an innkeeper with a good business connection would put on a coach in order to keep others off.

Referring to the subject of coaches being kept on the road at a loss to the proprietors, a gentleman, who was settling agent to several coaches, said: 'The

great rapidity with which coaches are hurried along, and the manner in which they are made to work together, had greatly diminished the advantages that coaches could produce to an inn. That very frequently an opposition was carried on by the old coach-masters from a sort of attachment to the road, a desire to keep it to themselves, and a spirit of party against all intruders, and they had sometimes lost large sums of money.'

He further gave an instance of an attempt by a joint-stock company to establish a coach on a road down in the North. It was composed of persons not at all connected with the business, nor with the inns on the road. It was an attempt to create a new era in coaching. They fancied there was an unwholesome system adopted by the innkeepers who were the chief coach-proprietors; but after carrying on their concern for about a year and a half, the company gave it up, having incurred a loss of many thousand pounds.

They did not find their own horses, but contracted for the working of the coach at so much a mile; and there was more money paid to the contractors than the company was receiving, after paying the expenses of tolls, duty, and so on, so that they were necessarily losing a large sum of money constantly, and the concern wholly failed.

Considering that at the time these observations were made persons were being conveyed by steamer from London to Hull for four shillings best cabin, and two shillings steerage, and no duty being payable in respect of them, the coach-proprietors do not seem to have complained without reason of the heavy taxation to which their business was subject in several ways. All that they desired was to be put on an equality with their competitors; and as long as there was not this unfair competition, the coaching interest never thought of complaining, but paid immense sums to the Government with the greatest cheerfulness. And as they contemplated almost the cessation of travelling, what they wanted was merely a sort of reprieve, or power to gain a little before they were completely done up.

I must say I think the old coach-proprietors were a most energetic set of men, rather wanting perhaps in discretion, and allowing their enterprising dispositions to lead them on to embarking in and continuing undertakings which they were perfectly well aware were failures in a financial point of view.

Where there were two coaches running against each other, with the proprietors of both probably knowing that there was not much more than a living for one, yet neither side would give in, as the publicity of being driven off the road would be somewhat galling

to the parties who had been defeated, and a corresponding triumph to those who still maintained their position, and kept their coach on, especially if the opposition had started with anything like a grand flourish of trumpets.

A coach-porter at Winchester, who used to load up the Southampton 'Telegraph' coach, was about to lead, according to the usual phrase, to the hymeneal altar a certain widow, regardless of the opinions and experience of many men, including the elder Mr. Weller, whose remarks to his son respecting widows readers of 'Pickwick' will probably recollect; but as they were published so many years since, it may not be out of place to repeat them:

'Widders, Sammy,' said Mr. Weller, 'are 'ceptions to every rule. I have heerd how many ord'nary women one widder's equal to in pint o' comin' over you. I think it's five-and-twenty, but I don't rightly know vether it ain't more.'

The coach-porter, Bishop by name, applied to the clergyman to have the ceremony performed at half-past seven o'clock in the morning. To this the clergyman demurred, and inquired the reason of the bridegroom being desirous of having it at so early an hour, when he replied that he should like to get it done in time for him to load the up 'Telegraph' from Southampton.

His future partner must have been somewhat of the same character, I should imagine, as the elder Mrs. Weller, as the landlord of the inn where the 'Telegraph' stopped said:

'She'll upset the coach, Bishop.'

'No, sir; I shall put her in near-wheeler, and double-thong her,' said Bishop.

I am unable to relate how far the double-thonging was called into requisition, or whether the experience of Mr. Bishop at all coincided with that of Mr. Weller. Under any circumstances, I guess the ceremony of going away to spend the honeymoon must have been dispensed with, bearing in mind the bridegroom's anxiety to be ready as usual to load the up-coach.

Several porters formed a necessary portion of a large London coach-proprietor's staff, and had a tolerably busy time of it in the early morning or evening.

In the morning there were all the parcels which had arrived on the previous evening by the day-coaches, together with all those which had come in by the night-coaches and mails, to be sorted, and put into the several carts taking different districts in town, and delivering the parcels. Each of these carts required two men—one to drive and take care of the parcels, while the other got out and delivered them

at the houses, receiving the amount of carriage and porterage, for which he gave a small ticket, specifying the inn from which it had come, and some other particulars; so that, in fact, these tickets formed a sort of advertisement for the proprietors. The morning-delivery being over, and the men returned with the carts and money received, which was handed in to the clerk in the booking-office, the porters had not much more to do until the hour approached when one of the night-coaches had to be loaded; and as some of these left London as early as three o'clock in the afternoon, the interval between the termination of the morning work and commencement of the afternoon was not very long.

As the afternoon advanced the work got brisker, for from one of the large inns three or four coaches might be leaving the yard at the same time, if there was room for them; or if not, shortly after each other.

One of the dodges by which a porter used to earn some extra shillings was, as soon as a coach was drawn into the yard, or, if it had stood there all day, just before the time for loading arrived, and before the passengers came, to put his own coat on the box-seat; when those who were not up to it, seeing a coat on the seat supposed it was engaged, and put their own coats elsewhere; but anyone ac-

quainted with the practice would ask the porter if the seat was engaged, and if the passenger looked a likely person to give a gratuity to the amount of a shilling, or expressed his willingness to do so, his own coat and that of the porter changed places.

Another thing the porters used to do was to dry and brush all the mud and dirt off the coachmen and guards' coats, etc., and have their boots and clothes all ready to put on the next time their coach was going out. For this the coachmen and guards paid them.

Apropos of the boot-cleaning there used to be a coachman who, like many of his order, always wore top-boots; but his were different in appearance from all the others, as he persisted in having the tops always blacked, as well as the rest of the boots. It happened, however, that the porter at the inn where he stopped for the night, and on whom therefore devolved the duty of cleaning his boots, had been a gentleman's servant, and in that capacity had had the care of his master's top-boots, and considered himself perfectly acquainted with the correct mode of treating these articles of dress. When, therefore, the coachman's boots came into his hands, conceiving that they had been wrongly treated by some ignorant individual, he set to work vigorously to get all the blacking off the tops, and thus restore the boots to

what he considered should be their proper condition. To do this effectually on the first occasion was an impossibility, so the boots had to be worn with a neutral sort of tint on the tops, much to the disgust of the coachman, who took means to have them restored immediately to the condition in which he prided himself on keeping them.

A head-porter's place at a large coaching inn was a very lucrative one, and those who assisted the guards in loading the coaches generally received a trifle from the passengers for putting up their luggage; and indeed they looked for it, much in the same way as the railway porter does now, notwithstanding 'The company's servants are strictly prohibited from receiving gratuities, and passengers are earnestly requested to abstain from giving them money.' It used to be said that, in order to further the observance of this regulation, the porters' trousers supplied by the company were made without pockets. The correctness of this assertion, however, I am open to doubt.

The night-coaches all left London some time before the mails, which had to be loaded up by the porters, the guards with the bags being taken up in the yard of the General Post Office; except the western mails, and these left their City offices about half-past seven, jogging quietly to the West End, with a porter

behind to take care of the luggage on the roof, and prevent persons from getting up. They were followed by a cart, driven by one of the men who had driven out a parcel-van in the morning, there being a separate cart with the guard and bags for each mail.

The empty carts were then driven back to the City, the porters who had gone up with the mails so arranging that they should ride back on the several day-coaches, which had not guards, and thus prevent anything being purloined on the journey from the West End to the City.

For the mail-cart, man, and horse, the London proprietor used to charge against the earnings of the mail thirteen pounds a year, and also charge for way-bills, books, and booking-offices in the City and at the West End.

That fires sometimes occurred by sparks from the railway-engine, and damaged the passengers' luggage during the time the mail was being conveyed by train on a railway-truck, appears from the entries I find in a sharing account of the Bristol mail:

	£	s.	d.
Brymer's portmanteau, burnt by fire on rail -	3	10	0
Paid damages to parcels and passengers' luggage by fire: Levy's parcel, £15 15s.; Morgan, passengers, £2 5s. - - - - - -	18	0	0

Claims for losses of parcels were frequent, as things would sometimes slip off a coach, through a strap or cord giving way, thus, especially at night, dropping on the road unnoticed. The liability, however, of common carriers was restricted to a certain sum by Act of Parliament, except where the owner of the parcel protected himself by special insurance. This, however, was very seldom done, parcels of great value being frequently delivered into the personal charge of either the coachman or guard, to whom a gratuity was given for his trouble, and if the package was small he would probably carry it in one of his pockets for greater security.

Such things have occurred as four persons, having ascertained that a parcel of great value was going to be forwarded at a certain time, engaging the whole of the inside of the coach, and in the course of the journey managing to effect a communication from the inside with the boot, abstracting the parcel, and leaving the coach before the loss was discovered ; and I believe it was in this way that a parcel containing a large sum of money, which was being transmitted by the 'Greyhound' night-coach for payment of some wages, was stolen out of the front-boot, and never recovered. A similar robbery was effected from the front-boot of one of the Oxford day-coaches before it left Piccadilly, but not by the same means.

Another case relating to the carriage of a parcel containing a large sum of money I knew, and also the gentleman to whom it occurred; as he has been dead many years, I may, without scruple, recount the circumstances. That they are still vividly impressed on my mind will be readily understood when I mention that this gentleman used occasionally to throw shillings and half-crowns to be scrambled for by some of us who were schoolfellows of his nephews; such events not being very common with schoolboys, they are naturally remembered even though many years have passed since they occurred.

It happened that this gentleman, who was a banker, was travelling about five-and-twenty miles in a coach, being the only person inside, and having with him a bag containing about £500. On arriving at the town where he resided, and the coach stopped, he got out and went home, forgetting all about the bag, which he had left on the seat of the coach. As it was Saturday night, the coach was drawn into the yard at the back of the inn, and left in an open shed to remain until washed to go out again early on the Monday morning. The next day being Sunday, the bank to which the money would in the ordinary course of business have been taken, was of course not opened; and it then occurred to the gentleman that he had left his bag in the coach.

He immediately went to the inn, and found the coach just in the same condition as when it had been drawn into the yard on the previous evening, with the bag on the seat inside, and all its contents exactly as he had left them.

Afterwards the banker unfortunately went out of his mind, and it was probably owing to forgetfulness arising from the malady with which he was threatened that he left his bag in the coach, and thought no more of it until some inquiry was made of him respecting it.

Another reason for my having a vivid recollection of this event is that the coach was one by which some of us used to travel to and from school. It belonged to and was driven by a man whom I knew well in the days when we used, as boys, to have round-topped trunks covered with calf-skin and with curious strips of leather running in various directions, and (by way of ornament, I suppose) thickly-set rows of nails after the style of a coffin —except that the nails were bright and brass-headed instead of black.

In those days coaches were not so particularly or strictly timed, as may be gathered from the fact that when two or three of us were going back to school the proprietor would bring his coach up to our house, which was out of his usual route, and there turn his

coach and four horses round, a piece of coachmanship which I used in those early days to think a great feat and admire immensely.

Very likely parcels and articles of considerable value were often left in coaches and chaises, or dropped from them in the course of their journeys along the road, falling into the hands of the professional tramp or other wayfarer, or at times left at the coach-offices, forgotten, and never claimed; as is the case now in numerous instances, if we may judge by the number of things of various descriptions left at the railway cloak-rooms, and subsequently disposed of at periodical sales.

In the generality of cases the booking-offices for the coaches had no superfluous room for stowing away luggage and other things, there being barely accommodation for all the parcels and goods conveyed by the coaches each day and night.

One use which was made of the old worn-out coach-horses on the Dover road, was to work them in teams of four in the fish-carts, which were really light waggons, driven by a post-boy or some such individual, and carrying from Folkestone and Dover to London the fish sold by the boatload by auction on the beach as the boats came in. Probably the old coach-horses and posters had occasionally a hard journey, the road being so hilly that it is

said there is only one level mile between Shooter's Hill, eight miles from London, and a short distance out of Dover, which is seventy-one.

There was a noted coach on this road called the 'Tally Ho,' which in 1841 had a very narrow escape of an accident. The road was a mass of ice, and the coach was going down a terribly sharp incline on the Dartford side of Shooter's Hill, with the drag on, the coach being on some rough ground near the footpath, when the chain snapped, and the coach ran on to the wheelers. It was a case of full gallop or nothing, and the face of Clements, the coachman, was a sight to behold. The coach bounded about like a pea on a drum, but fortunately got safely to the bottom.

Another alarm on the same road, but without any accident, arose from an old hunter being in the team, near Faversham, when the hounds crossed the road in full cry a hundred yards ahead. When the old horse heard them he went nearly mad, put his ears back and kicked and squealed vigorously. Some persons on the coach quickly jumped down and set things to rights; but it was touch-and-go. He was taken out of the coach, and gave vent to his feelings by kicking one of the wheelers violently in the body; fortunately not with the full force of both feet, or it would apparently have driven his side in.

PUT HIS EARS BACK & KICKED & SQUEALED VIGOUROUSLY.

On Tuesday and Friday nights the foreign mails were conveyed to Dover by an extra mail-coach, which left London about midnight, and returned at odd times, as it had no letter-bag to bring back, but picked up any chance passengers. Although called a mail-coach, it was an ordinary stage-coach provided by Horne, who contracted for horsing it. There was of course in those days a good deal of smuggling at Dover, and one of these return mails was cleverly and successfully made use of by the smugglers in rather a smart way. A large cargo of lace had been landed, but was lost sight of by the revenue officers, who were on the look-out for it everywhere. As a blind to them, a post-chaise with four horses was driven from Dover at a great pace, with a number of packages inside. It was closely pursued by the officers in another chaise, and the chase was kept up till they got to Dartford, when it was overtaken, but nothing contraband was found in it. As soon as the supposed smugglers' chaise had left, the old foreign mail-coach started on its return to London, picked up all the smuggled goods at a roadside inn, and came leisurely up to London unsuspected, dropping the parcels of lace at the Bricklayer's Arms, in the Old Kent Road.

An old resident in a village on the Dover road many years back says: 'I saw an immense deal

of the coaching and posting on it, and it was wonderful how good people were in case of an accident. A coach was upset in the village, and a French lady was seriously hurt. Her husband and children were with her. They could not speak a word of English, and had very little money. The innkeeper housed them all, and the whole village took the matter up, and repaid the host like the Good Samaritan. Thackeray said, "We are all Good Samaritans, barring the twopence;" but our parish did not stop short of that.'

A bishop's chaplain, examining a candidate for orders, told him to repeat the story of the Good Samaritan, which he did correctly, winding up with the twopence for the host, and the orthodox promise, 'When I come again I will repay thee;' but here he added on his own account, 'and this he said knowing that he should see his face no more.'

CHAPTER XXII.

EARLY DAYS OF RAILWAYS.

HAVING seen what coaching business was before the days of railways, and something about the persons who carried it on, and the large amounts they contributed to the National Exchequer, it may be as well to inquire into the mode by which their trade was abolished, and also to see what difficulties and obstacles railway companies had to encounter before they succeeded in acquiring a position which enabled them entirely to supersede road-travelling.

Some of the notions as to the capabilities of steam-engines as locomotives can scarcely be read at this time without exciting some surprise and raising a smile, so very circumscribed were the ideas of the most sanguine.

Sixty or seventy years ago—or at all events at the commencement of the present century—I suppose nobody in existence dreamt of railways ever coming into use as an ordinary means of conveyance, still less of their attaining the present rate of

speed and monopoly of travelling. Any person venturing to express such an opinion would, I should imagine, have been deemed a fitting inmate for some similar abode to Colney Hatch; and as much attention would have been accorded to the opinion as to anyone who might now predict that the present railways will some day be entirely superseded by balloon-travelling.

In Mother Shipton's prophecies I believe something is shadowed forth as to railway-travelling; but I don't think her prophetic powers extended in any way to balloons, or that she even got so far as to prophesy the rate at which the fast day-coaches would travel.

In nothing, perhaps, has a greater revolution taken place during the last fifty years than in travelling. In 1835 there was not a railway out of London; and perhaps the Stockton and Darlington Railway, which was opened in the latter part of the year 1825, may be looked upon as the first commencement of railway-travelling, although in a very modified form compared with that of some thirty years later. It was not a very gigantic undertaking, being only a single line twenty-five miles long; but the great achievement, of course, was the propelling the train by steam—George Stephenson, the great engineer, having constructed the engine, and being the driver

on the opening day. The journey, however, as advertised to be performed, regularly occupied a period of two hours; and on the opening day, it being calculated that the pace would be about four or five miles an hour, a man on horseback proceeded in front. As the speed, it was found, could be increased, the equestrian had to leave the line, and then a rate of twelve miles an hour was attained, and considered a complete success.

Many difficulties had to be surmounted before the steam-engine was completed and got into workable order. The undertaking had met with very strong opposition in its earlier days, endeavours to obtain an Act of Parliament having been unsuccessful in three Sessions; one very strenuous opponent being the Duke of Cleveland, on the ground that the line would interfere with his hunting. He was successful in obstructing the progress of the undertaking for a time; but in a subsequent Session a Bill was brought in with the line marked out in a different direction, so that his property was avoided, and eventually the Act of Parliament was obtained in 1821.

The next line of any importance which came into operation, and which at its commencement more resembled railway-travelling of the present day, was the Liverpool and Manchester, opened in September,

1830, after having, like the Stockton and Darlington, encountered very strong opposition, and being defeated in one Session of Parliament, but eventually passed in 1826. The opening of this line, which was intended to have been quite a gala day, was, it will be recollected, sadly marred by the accident which occasioned the death of Mr. Huskisson.

It having then been established beyond all doubt, from the experience of these two companies, that railways could be constructed to travel at a rate of at least twelve miles an hour, almost the highest rate of speed which the engineers, including Stephenson, considered practicable for ordinary travelling, the railway spirit began gradually to spread over the country; not so very rapidly, though, for some ten or fifteen years as might have been expected, as from the year 1830 to 1841 only two hundred and sixty-two Railway Bills were brought into Parliament, and the greater number of these were to amend former Acts. In 1832 only eleven Bills were brought in, while in 1837 there were sixty-four, being the smallest and largest number in the years between 1830 and 1841. This was very different from the state of things in 1847, when there were three hundred and thirty-one Bills before Parliament.

The formation of the different companies for constructing lines out of London would appear to have

followed very closely upon the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester line; but the making the surveys and plans, and various other details, including getting the requisite amounts of capital subscribed before Acts of Parliament could be obtained, occupied a considerable time; thus we find that the earliest of them was passed in 1833, and the others at varying intervals, as will be seen by the dates below — the London and Birmingham and the London and Greenwich following each other within a few days, though the preparations for the former were of course much the more extensive.

The London lines were passed in this order:

London and Birmingham	May 6, 1833.
London and Greenwich	May 17, 1833.
London and Southampton	1834.
London and Great Western	1835.
London and Croydon	1835.
London and Eastern Counties	1836.
London, Northern and Eastern	1836.
London and South Eastern	1836.
London and Brighton	1837.

The Great Northern was not passed until some years afterwards. It met with a most strenuous opposition from a rival company. Originally the two companies competing for this line were called the 'London and York' and the 'Great Northern,' and the line was not opened until after the year 1848.

At the end of the year 1839 the whole amount

which railway companies had been allowed to raise, either by capital, in joint-stock, or by loan, did not amount to more than £57,788,444, a very trifling sum compared with the amounts which have subsequently been sanctioned and since raised.

The gradual annual increase in the length of railways, as they were from time to time opened, will be seen by these figures:

In 1843 the number of miles opened were				1,857
1844	„	„	„	1,952
1845	„	„	„	2,148
1846	„	„	„	2,441
1847	„	„	„	3,036

Thus in the short period of five years the length of the railways available for public service was nearly doubled. All the principal lines out of London had overcome their Parliamentary obstacles, and the companies must have proceeded vigorously with their works, as up to the end of the year 1843 the length of all the railways at that time authorized by Parliament to be constructed was 2,276 miles, and the length opened 1,952 miles, thus showing that the entire length of lines sanctioned by Parliament had been actually opened, with the exception of the small number of 324 miles.

Railway schemes, however, throughout the kingdom continued to be brought out yearly in shoals, and eventually led to the panic which occurred about

1848, when 'stag'-hunting became a very extensive matter of business, resulting, however, generally in the escape of the 'stag,' who, having an early suspicion of the approach of his pursuers, got a good start, and eventually managed to evade them and reach a place of safety. As so many years have passed since that time, persons may have forgotten the meaning of the word 'stag,' and others be too young to have heard the expression. It may be as well, therefore, to explain that it was a term applied to persons who, having obtained letters of allotment for railway shares, become directors in railway companies, or otherwise incurred liabilities which they were totally unable to meet, were obliged to make a hasty journey across the Channel to Boulogne or some other place abroad, where they were safe from any hostile measures to enforce payment of calls. A vast number of persons were compelled to resort to this plan, and it was an everyday occurrence to hear that so-and-so was a 'stag.' Those 'stags,' however, who had not the means of going abroad and residing there were obliged to adopt some other measures for concealing their whereabouts.

By the end of the year 1847 the railway fever had attained its height, to which it had been rapidly progressing for the few previous years, as the statement of lines authorized and those opened stands

thus: length of lines authorized to be constructed 11,673 miles, with 3,816 opened.

Although Parliamentary sanction had been given for the construction of railways extending over more than 11,000 miles, it must not be supposed that such sanction was obtained without encountering very great, expensive, and frequently successful opposition, eventually overcome, but too often at immense cost in compromising with the opponents of the lines. In the early days of railways they were opposed by classes of persons who have subsequently seen their mistake, and have been active promoters in undertakings for bringing railways to their neighbourhood and properties. The most conspicuous instances of fear of the proximity of a railway occurred on the Great Western, which probably was as strongly opposed and had as hard a battle to fight before it got through Parliament as any line—perhaps not even excepting the Great Northern.

Some of the opinions of men of the highest standing and professional knowledge show how difficult it was at the commencement of the railway era to form accurate estimates of the expenses of constructing railways, or of their capabilities for conveying passengers and traffic. Having alluded to the opposition to the Great Western line, some account of its progress through Parliament will show from what

a modest and limited scheme it originated, and the battles it had to fight before a victory was secured.

The first application to Parliament by the Company was made in 1834, but without success. It was then confined to the construction of a line between Bristol and Bath, and London and Reading.

In the following Session, considering it was not advisable to go to Parliament with what appeared to be an imperfect scheme, application was made for the entire line from London to Bristol. To this, however, there were several very strong opponents —one being a company for constructing a line from the Southampton Railway at Basingstoke to Bath, the Southampton Railway Company urging in support of their case that Parliament had already, in the previous Session (1834), passed the Act for the line from London to Southampton, by which forty-four miles in a westerly direction would be made to Basingstoke.

The Kennet and Avon Canal Company opposed the Bill, as did also the Commissioners of the Thames Navigation, who contended that the Thames would be choked up for want of traffic, the drainage of the county destroyed, and Windsor Castle left without a water-supply—and that the railway would interfere with the drainage so far as to occasion floods, and prevent the convenient occupation of farms adjacent

to the line. No stone was left unturned by many gentlemen and influential landowners to prevent the line being made, and avert what was called the dreaded nuisance of a railway through their properties.

The grounds of opposition on the part of the Eton College authorities at the present time seem rather ludicrous ; but they were then urged upon Parliament in all seriousness, and doubtless with a sincere belief in their validity. It is worth while to enumerate them a little fully.

The school, it was said, would be absolutely and entirely destroyed. London would pour forth the most abandoned of its inhabitants to come down by steam, and pollute the young minds of the pupils, whilst the boys would take advantage of the short interval of their play-hours to run up to town with the speed of a rocket, mix in all the dissipation there, and return before their absence could be discovered. In addition to this, the beauty of the country and the retirement of private dwellings would be destroyed.

The battle before the Committee of the House of Commons was fought inch by inch with a degree of earnestness and assiduity on both sides almost unequalled in any similar proceedings. The Bill eventually passed through the Commons, but before the Committee of the House of Lords the case in

its support occupied eighteen days, while the opening speech of the opposing counsel occupied no less than four. Some five or six of the leading engineers of the day, including the Stephensons, and Mr. Brunel, the Company's own engineer, were called as witnesses in support of the Company's case; while, to their surprise, only the engineer of the Southampton line and the proposed line from Basingstoke to Bath was called on behalf of the opponents.

After this very severe struggle the Company at length emerged triumphant, the Royal assent being given on the 31st of August, 1835; the battle, however, had occupied the Committee of the House of Commons no less than fifty-seven days in the Session of 1834, and six months in the Session of the following year. The public estimate of the undertaking may be judged of from the circumstance that on the passing of the Act it became necessary to advertise for subscriptions for the additional capital of half a million, and in less than a fortnight applications to the extent of a million and a half were made. The Act, as then passed, was for the construction of the line to Bristol, joining the London and Birmingham about four miles from London. The estimate of the expense of constructing the whole line, including two branches to Bradford and Trowbridge, making the total length one hundred and twenty-seven miles,

was two millions and a half, which was considered quite sufficient to cover all contingencies. An Act of Parliament was subsequently obtained for providing an independent terminus at Paddington. Although only a line from London to Bristol, it was called the Great Western in view of its being the main channel for all the traffic of the west of England and South Wales. It is almost the only line out of London which has adhered to its original name; but Brunel, the engineer, was a man who did things upon an enlarged scale, whether in shipbuilding or railways—the broad gauge being his idea, and the Great Western then the only line upon which it was laid down, the Bristol and Exeter being a continuation of it.

The lines out of London which have changed their original names are:

London and North-Western, originally London and Birmingham.
London, Brighton and South Coast, originally London and Brighton.
Great Eastern, originally Eastern Counties.
South-Western, originally London and Southampton.

Seeing the ramifications that have taken place, and the branch lines that have been thrown out right and left to communicate with the main trunk lines, the name designating the district encompassed by each main line is more appropriate than that of the name

merely of the principal town at the extreme terminus of the main line.

According to the several dates at which their Acts of Parliament were passed, the Companies set to work in the construction of their lines, getting portions of them opened either at one or both ends as soon as possible, in order to be in the receipt of some returns to meet their very heavy expenses.

The Birmingham and Greenwich were the two first lines out of London which received Parliamentary sanction, and the latter, being so short a line, was completed in three years and a half; the Act having received the Royal assent in May, 1833, the line was opened on the 14th of December, 1836. Being the first line opened out of London, it was made quite a festive occasion, and tickets of admission to the station were issued to the various friends and supporters of the line on large cards, with a picture of the railway as a heading, followed by

OPENING
of the
LONDON AND GREENWICH RAILWAY.
This ticket will admit

At the London Station, December 14, 1836.
J. Y. AKERMAN, *Secretary.*
The train will start at 12 o'clock.

The other lines out of London opened on about the following dates :

London and Birmingham to Tring -	- 1837
Great Western to Twyford - -	July, 1839
London and Croydon - - -	- 1839
South-Western to Southampton - -	May, 1840
Brighton - - - - -	Sept., 1841
Northern and Eastern to Bishop Stortford -	May, 1842
Eastern Counties to Colchester - -	- 1842

Shortly after this time, the above lines were completed so far as the points of their original destination were concerned. Railway companies were busy throughout the country, and the various branches for connection with the main lines were in progress. There was no longer any doubt that railways could travel at a speed at least double that of any other mode of conveyance.

Questions, however, were raised as to the practicability of railway-travelling by night, and policemen were kept on the Leeds and Selby line until the passenger train had passed. It was considered somewhat of an achievement that a passenger train on the Liverpool and Manchester line started as late as six o'clock from each end—from sunset to nine or ten o'clock being considered the most dangerous time ; goods only were carried by night, when the policemen had been withdrawn. A very

competent authority, no less a person than the President of the Society of Engineers, said, 'If mails and passengers were conveyed, policemen would be required along the line during the night;' and in answer to the question whether it had been found necessary to light up the lines by gas or other lights where goods and passengers were conveyed by railways at night, he said, 'Although the lighting might be agreeable to the travellers, it would be of little or no real use in the event of there being an obstruction on the line, as it would not be seen in time to stop the engine.' The principal danger he attached to travelling by night was in the case of cattle having strayed on to the line; he summed up his opinion as to railway-travelling by night by saying that it would be comparatively as safe as by road—adding, however, that he was perhaps an interested witness.

With the view of ascertaining whether there was any difficulty in travelling as punctually in the dark as by daylight, an account was taken for six weeks in the months of December, 1836, and January, 1837, of the time occupied by the trains conveying the mails between Liverpool and Manchester; the day mail-train left each end at two o'clock, and the evening one at five, when it would be dark; the result was that the journeys from Liverpool to Manchester by

the two o'clock trains only exceeded their time on eight occasions, and by the five o'clock train on thirteen. The trains on the reverse way from Manchester at two o'clock exceeded their time on twenty-five occasions, while the five o'clock train was late on twenty-one only. Accordingly there does not seem to have been any appreciable loss of time in consequence of travelling in the dark ; the trains, however, only ran at the rate of twenty miles an hour, being allowed an hour and a half to do the thirty miles.

As twenty miles an hour was at that time looked upon as about the highest rate of speed at which railway trains could travel safely and punctually (the line having then been opened about six years), it is not surprising to find that ten years previously there existed a very strong opinion among engineers and other scientific persons that steam-power could be made available for travelling on ordinary roads. The idea probably originated from seeing the moderate rate of travelling on which the Stockton and Darlington line. The principal advocates and supporters. of the system were a Mr. Gurney, who, after having expended upwards of £22,000 in constructing engines and otherwise endeavouring to bring the undertaking into general use, retired from it, but stated his intention of taking it up again in seven years, when

he thought the public mind would be prepared for it.

The schemes that were then in contemplation, and the opinions that were given by highly scientific and learned persons on the subject of steam-travelling on ordinary roads, appear at the present day the visionary projects of enthusiasts, and such as we can scarcely believe to have been entertained with any reasonable prospect of success. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind how exceedingly limited was then the knowledge of the most talented professional men with respect to the development and capabilities of railways.

In addition to Mr. Gurney, a most implicit believer in the power of steam-engines travelling by road was a Colonel Maceroni, who certainly accomplished a good deal, as he managed to go at the rate of twenty-four miles an hour, or, on an average, twenty. His steam-carriages did not exceed six tons in weight, and were under perfect control, as he was in the habit of running them in and out of London, and one locomotive-carriage was regularly worked for some time from Paddington to the Bank, along the New Road, but eventually withdrawn, as it did not pay. The numerous stoppages were greatly to its disadvantage.

One difficulty, and a very serious one, which

the steam-carriages had to contend with, was the want of capital — most of their inventors being poor men; much money was expended in experiments and improvements — more than individual capitalists could be persuaded to advance, although Mr. Gurney altogether sunk £100,000 in the undertaking, and a Mr. Ogle £60,000. Moreover, about this time the public mind was running upon railways, which met with very general support on the part of the community, while the locomotive schemes remained in the hands of a few individuals. That, notwithstanding all the difficulties he had to contend with, Colonel Maceroni was tolerably successful may be gathered from the journeys he performed, and it may be assumed that he carried locomotive-travelling on roads as far as was possible, and showed the utmost extent to which it was practically available.

Some further account of his experimental journeys and their results may not be uninteresting, first, however, giving two instances of experiments on railways which, like his, did not turn out very successfully.

Variations from the ordinary mode of drawing trains by a steam-engine attached in front were adopted by two short lines out of London, namely, the Croydon and the Blackwall. On the former the

atmospheric plan was tried, but not with much success, as it did not continue long in use.

On the Blackwall line there was not any engine attached to the carriages; but a metal rope running the whole length of the line, passing over small wheels and round large cylinders at each end, was kept in motion by steam-engines. Attached to each carriage was a pair of nippers by which a grip was taken of the rope until, the carriage arriving at the station for which it was destined, the guard in charge loosed the hold on the rope and stopped the carriage; the same process being adopted on the return journey. Many inconveniences no doubt attended the plan, which, together probably with greatly increased traffic, rendered its continuance impracticable, so that the ordinary method was resorted to.

I have mentioned these two instances, as they were experiments in the early days of railways, which, after the test of practical experience, were proved to be unavailable.

On another line very considerable alteration in its original construction was found necessary. The London and Birmingham rails were, when the line was first made, laid on square blocks of stone—about two or three feet square, I should say—and at short distances from each other. The rattle was something tremendous, but I suppose this was not why

they were removed, and the wooden sleepers laid across substituted throughout the line.

The Great Western, on the other hand, is laid on continuous lengths of timber running under the rails for the entire distance of the line.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EARLY DAYS OF RAILWAYS (Continued).

SEEING how far railway-travelling has surpassed the expectations of its most sanguine supporters in early days, it is of course just possible that the road-locomotive system, if taken up by the public, might in like manner have far exceeded the expectations of those who were at one time considered somewhat visionary, and too much prejudiced in its favour to be relied on.

The great labour and perseverance of Colonel Maceroni is clear from the journeys he performed; for instance, he ran his locomotives every day for eighteen months, and by way of giving the public an opportunity of seeing what he could do, advertised in the papers that he would take any persons who wished to have a ride and a good dinner besides to Harrow, or to or from Edgware; to the former of which places the road for a distance of two miles is steeper than any hill between London and York, or London and Dover, and in addition

is made of very soft material, or, in the Colonel's words, was always 'like a feather-bed.' Notwithstanding that it was covered with loose gravel from top to bottom, the Colonel went up it at the rate of eight miles an hour. He travelled from the Regent Circus in Oxford Street to Watford; and went four times a day up and down Oxford Street, slow or fast, or sometimes standing still, according to the state of the traffic and carriages. Locomotive carriages, it was said, were perfectly safe on common roads, and capable of ascending the loftiest hills; and as at that time railways did not aspire to going more than twenty miles an hour, the locomotive would not only supersede the road-coaches, but would be able to compete with any railway in the kingdom. The persons advocating the introduction of steam-locomotives on the roads were few in number, and some of them having expended all their available capital in experiments and perfecting new inventions and improvements, the public in general did not seem to give the subject much encouragement; meanwhile it had been rapidly becoming manifest that railways were likely to be a great success, and that their advantages and capabilities were only just beginning to be developed. The result of this was that capital all went towards their construction, and the locomotive projects naturally failed for want of

pecuniary support. Subsequent experience has shown how utterly impossible it would have been for the road-locomotives ever to compete with the railways.

That everyone was not as successful as Colonel Maceroni in the endeavour to work steam-carriages on ordinary roads, appears from the following account of an experimental trip made in September, 1841 :

'On Thursday morning last a new steam-carriage built by a company of gentlemen at the West-end of the town started on an experimental trip from London to Hastings; they arrived in the afternoon a mile from Hastings, when unfortunately the boiler burst. The carriage was brought into the town, and on Friday it was repaired; on Saturday morning the party left Hastings on their return to London. In descending the long and steep hill within one mile of Sevenoaks the skid or drag-chain broke, and they descended the hill at the rate of sixty-three miles an hour, and fortunately reached the bottom of it undamaged in person, although they every moment expected to be dashed to pieces. On their attempting to proceed up the opposite hill into Sevenoaks, it was found impossible—the whole of the machinery being broken and out of place. With the assistance of ten horses it was conveyed to the Crown Inn at Sevenoaks, where it remained, much damaged.'

The idea of this competition, however, was not so unreasonable as at first glance would seem to be the case, for the road-locomotive period, so to speak, was rather earlier than the railway, as in 1839 a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, who had devoted much attention to the subject, said he had travelled more than 3,000 miles by steam-carriages on common roads during the previous fourteen years, so that they were in use before even the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Neither the projectors of the road steam-carriage nor railway engineers anticipated a pace much above twenty miles an hour, so that in that respect both were about on a par. But the road-locomotive supporters had this great advantage, that their roads were all constructed and ready for them to run on, and the only thing for them to do was to provide the locomotive engines and start them; the railways, on the other hand, having first of all to acquire the necessary powers for the purchase of the property through which their lines were to pass, and then incur a very large outlay in buying the land and constructing the line. The future of the railways having dawned upon the public, there was an end of the idea that steam-carriages would one day cover the common roads throughout the kingdom.

As soon as the railways were completed for any considerable distance, engagements were entered into

between the companies and the Postmaster-General for conveyance of the mails at a speed not approximating the present rate, but more than double that of the road-mails.

The mail-bags taken out of London nightly by any one of the principal railways exceed probably in bulk all that used to be carried by the six-and-twenty mail-coaches which left London every night.

Seeing how little idea the most talented amongst the engineers had of the capabilities of railways, especially as to speed, it is not surprising to find that in their calculations of the expenses of railway construction they were equally wide of the mark; even Stephenson and Brunel were said to have expended 140 and 150 per cent. more than their estimates.

The mania for making railways was certainly something extraordinary; no scheme seemed absurd or preposterous enough to prevent persons from eagerly seeking to obtain letters of allotment of shares, directly the prospectus was published. With many the issuing of the prospectus, shortly afterwards followed by the promoters seeking a change of air in foreign climates, was the extent to which they proceeded. One in particular, which ended in this manner, was a scheme which contemplated combining the advantages of steam-locomotive travelling with

the utilization of the main roads. The plan was to partition off one part of the road by a high fence running longitudinally, one side to be used by the locomotives running, and the other in the ordinary way for road-travelling by carriages and carts, etc. That the company or proposed company collapsed, is not to be wondered at; but it does certainly seem rather surprising that any persons should have been found sufficiently bold to issue a prospectus for such a palpably unworkable scheme, or incur any expense at all in connection with it.

When the country was thoroughly flooded with railway schemes of every character, both practicable and impracticable—remunerative prospectively probably, in some instances, but in many without the slightest belief, or even hope, on behalf of the promoters that they could ever be carried out—a reaction began to take place which led to the great panic about the year 1848.

As in every panic, numbers of persons were utterly ruined, and it was not until the visionary and rotten schemes had collapsed, leaving only the *bonâ-fide* undertakings, that the more healthy state of affairs returned; but many even of the schemes which were ultimately completed, failed to be productive of any profit or advantage to the original shareholders.

With a view, it would seem, of somewhat neutraliz-

ing the monopoly which it appeared railways would establish, power was given in some of the earlier Acts of Parliament for persons to run their own locomotives and carriages on the companies' lines, and this was in some instances actually exercised; but the companies practically possessed a monopoly of carriage on their lines, as by fixing their tolls at their maximum, it would not answer for persons to provide their own locomotives; moreover the companies could regulate the hours of starting, were not bound to allow the use of their signals and stations, to provide water for the locomotives, or otherwise to give the assistance of their servants or watchmen, so that although not an impossibility, no persons could advantageously work their own locomotives on railway companies' lines.

To counteract the monopoly of carrying passengers, which it very soon became apparent companies virtually possessed, as also to afford a certain and inexpensive means of travelling to those who had been in the habit of using the stage-waggons, carriers' carts, or other cheap means of transit, the Government saw the necessity of substituting some alternative for these customary modes which the railways had stopped, and hence the trains called 'Parliamentary' were established by Act of Parliament in 1844, which provided that the carriages should be protected

from the weather, go at not less than twelve miles an hour, and stop at every station; the fare not to exceed a penny a mile, and the company to run at least one train daily each way. Without this Act it is not very clear how the poor people would have got about the country.

What were called the open carriages, and represented the third class before the Parliamentary trains were established, were very different from the third-class carriages now in use, for they were wholly uncovered, and on some lines the seats were fixed in trucks very much the same as those in which road-carriages are conveyed. The establishment of the Parliamentaries was a great boon to the poorer classes, who instead of travelling at a rate of about four miles an hour, with great irregularity as to the time of departure or arrival at any place, being in a great measure exposed to the weather, and paying probably as much as the fare of a Parliamentary train, are now carried in comfortable carriages, at double the rate of the fastest coaches, and with tolerable certainty as to the times of departure and arrival at the different stations; although I find that some of the companies in their official time-books, in order to protect themselves from any claims for compensation arising from want of punctuality, issue this notice:

'Every attention will be paid to ensure punctuality

as far as it is practicable, but the Directors give notice that the Company do not undertake that the trains shall start or arrive at the time specified in the tables, nor will they be accountable for any loss, inconvenience, or expense which may arise from delays or detention.'

The old coach-proprietors never ventured to issue such a notice.

When railways were first commenced, everybody in the shape of an owner of property seemed to look upon them as things to be kept as much at a distance as possible, and as seriously detrimental to the value of houses and land, as in the case of the Collegiate Dons at Oxford, and the governing authorities at Eton; but now applications are constantly made to railway companies to erect stations on their lines in order to increase the accommodation they afford as much as possible, and in advertising property to be sold or let, it is usually described as being 'within a mile of a railway station,' 'close to a station, with a good service of trains,' or 'within a short distance of two railways, with frequent trains.

In 1833, many City men lived in the City at their places of business—not merely shopkeepers, but merchants and other men of considerable position; and not very long before that period, men of sporting tendencies would ride down from Cheapside, setting

off early in the morning, according to the custom of the period, hunt at Streatham or Norwood, and shoot also over the same district.

In those days most men who hunted, shot, or took much outdoor exercise, were generally good at a bottle of old port. A City man who lived in Bucklersbury, and used to ride with other City men and hunt in the neighbourhood of Thornton Heath and Croydon, formed a sort of club. After the day's hunting was over, the members dined together at a small country inn, where they had laid in a stock of wine for their own use only, the landlord's (if indeed he had any) not being sufficiently choice for men who were in the habit of attending at City dinners. By degrees the club was either broken up, or from some other cause discontinued meeting at the little country inn, and they made the landlord a present of their remaining stock of wine. Some time afterwards a gentleman visiting the inn, and knowing of the arrangements that used to exist with regard to the supply of wine, expressed a wish, if the landlord had any left, to have a bottle of the old port, expecting to get something very choice. Rather, however, to his astonishment the landlord said, 'Lor', sir, we have got rid of all that; we were obliged to make it into negus; the people wouldn't drink it without.' It evidently did not suit the rustic palate.

There was a story told as to the mode of hunting, whether at the end of the last or early part of the present century I don't know, but it ran thus:

Some old farmers used to meet for hare-hunting, and went to the meet in what were called their drinking-carts, in which they could sit, trusting to their horses to take them home, though they were not in a condition to return on horseback. On arrival at the meet the horses were taken out of the carts, saddled and mounted, and the hunting commenced. As to the pack no account is given, but it probably consisted of one or more dogs brought by the several members of the party, and with a slight dash of the hound in their breed. If when the dinner-hour arrived, about midday, they were still in pursuit of a hare, or there was a check, a stick was stuck in the ground at the point where the hare was last seen, and an adjournment for dinner took place, the sport being ended for that day; but on the following day the hunt was resumed, commencing at the stick, and then proceeded according to the plan previously pursued.

The City men who lived out of town might be thoroughly in the country, though only five or six miles from the Bank; if they did not keep their own carriages they went to town by what was generally called 'The Stage,' which meant a coach running

about that distance, and carrying six inside, with the basket behind, which was a sort of box containing two seats for three persons on each, sitting in the same position as in an ordinary waggonette; it was just above the axle of the hind-wheels, with steps at the back to get up into it, and was in use on the Greenwich and Blackheath coaches until they were taken off the road on the opening of the railway.

When the South-Western line first opened seats were constructed for two persons on the roof of the carriage, their feet resting on a footboard between the carriages, but protected from the chance of being crushed by the buffers not allowing the carriages to come sufficiently near to each other. Probably the plan was found likely to lead to accidents from passengers standing up and coming in contact with bridges along the line, and hence was discontinued.

Other improvements have taken place from time to time, the most important probably being the introduction of the telegraphic signals—rather different from the policemen all along the Manchester and Liverpool line.

What with sleeping-carriages, dining-cars, foot-warmers, and other comforts and conveniences in railway-travelling at the present time, persons can scarcely recognise it as the mode of travelling in their early days, less than fifty years since.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OLD STABLES ON THE ROADS.

Various were the places and their aspects as seen by the traveller in the course of a night on the mail or coach. You might come to the large market-town, a scene of bustle and business in the daytime; but when you arrived there in the middle of the night, the only sound you heard was most probably the guard's horn, waking up the horsekeeper, and apprizing him of the approach of the mail, and that it was time for him to get his horses out into the street, ready for a change, if he had not already got them there, as, from the proverbial punctuality of the mails, he might be sure that almost to a minute, unless something had happened to cause a delay, the mail would pull up at the change. The guard's horn would also be the intimation to the person in charge of the post-office to be ready to take the bags from him, in exchange for those to go on. It frequently happened that the post-office in a town was some little distance from the change, and then the mail

would pull up as it passed, either before or after the change, according to the locality; and the guard could help at the change as he could at all the little roadside places, where they often changed, though not in a town or perhaps even a village, as the changes were arranged according to the places where convenient stabling could be procured, the length of ground suited, or it met the convenience of the persons finding the horses, and thus it would sometimes occur that a town was passed through by the mail without changing in it—merely dropping and picking up the mail-bags.

At odd little places where you used to pull up for the change, perhaps ten mail horses stood, being four and a rest-horse for the down, and a similar number for the up mail. Several stages of the mails were horsed in this way by farmers, or small publichouse-keepers, or horse-dealers, over parts of the ground where none of the proprietors who had entered into and signed the Post-Office contract would provide the horses upon the terms of sharing only in the mileage according to the earnings; and in those instances local men had to be found to cover the ground at a fixed rate of payment, irrespective of the amount of the earnings.

There was a great similarity among the villages along the main roads, which may be seen still, where there is not a railway sufficiently near to have intro-

duced the speculative builder to the place, when, of course, its old appearance is entirely changed, in some respects by the alteration of the fronts of the houses in the main streets, by putting in large windows with plate glass, or throwing out a bay-window, and otherwise transforming the place to such an extent as to render it scarcely recognisable; and then, in addition to alterations, erecting a number of cottages or so-called villas, or converting ranges of stabling down the yard into dwelling-houses.

Two characteristics there invariably were about the villages on the great roads. The first was length, probably from half to three-quarters of a mile, or even more, the houses nearly all standing on each side of the main road; the second was that about one house in six on both sides of the road would be a public-house, or inn, none aspiring to the name of an hotel, though almost every one would have stabling, more or less, some ranges extending on each side down a long yard.

This was, of course, a most valuable adjunct to the house, as the stabling necessarily brought a number of persons there, the majority of whom would feel it incumbent upon them to 'take something for the good of the house.'

Although many of the ranges of stabling attached to these old public-houses have been converted into

dwellings, many may still be found where, for want of any profitable result likely to accrue from alterations, there being no demand for additional house accommodation, the stables have remained in the same state as when the traffic on the road was in full swing, save only that for want of use and repair they have sunk into a woefully dilapidated and melancholy condition. 'We rented a ten-stall stable with loft over at a farm where there were only three or four cottages, the stables being about eighty or a hundred yards from the road. The mail we horsed was the only coach that changed there; but in going up the road in the year 1882, I found all the stables had been pulled down and the ground cultivated.' Such is the account given by an old coach and mail proprietor.

So far as I have by chance at different times had an opportunity of looking into old coaching-stables, the purposes to which they are now generally applied may be thus stated:

In a stall at the end you will most likely find a calf penned up, and no other use for any of the other stalls. In a stable up another yard you may find a litter of puppies under the manger with their mother. Elsewhere, you may see a hen sitting in one of the mangers which run the whole length of the stable, the said hen being the sole occupant of a ten-stall

stable. In another place you will see two or three unhappy geese put up to fatten, with a small pan of water, with the object, it may be presumed, of holding out to them the hope of one day being released and enabled to return to their native element, so that, living in a state of unbroken quietude, they have nothing to do but eat and grow fat. Lastly, in the entire absence of all live-stock, either equine, bovine, or canine, a stall may be appropriated either as a coal or wood depôt. I think I have now summed up the various purposes to which these buildings are applied, and in default of their being so required, you may find them wholly unused, the door open, and possibly half off its hinges.

By-the-bye, I had forgotten to mention one species of living occupant which may be found, I may venture to say without exception, in every one of these old buildings—I allude to the spiders, who, judging from the quantity of cobwebs, and the numerous large specimens you will see of their weavers, must for very many years have had most peaceful and quite undisturbed abodes, far removed from the destructive and troublesome broom of the housemaid, or the duster of the neat and prim old maid in her little parlour.

It happened to me one day some years since to be compulsorily fixed in one of the coaching villages on

a main road for some hours for want of a train, or any means of conveyance being procurable whereby I could leave it. I strolled about the village, making inquiry for that noted individual 'the oldest inhabitant,' in expectation of finding some one acquainted with the place in its more lively and prosperous days, and eventually was directed to the little house of a tailor whose daughter, I was told, was living with him, and was the widow of a man who had been a horsekeeper for some of the coaches.

As I opened the door, the customary intimation of the entry of some one was given by the ringing of a bell, and I found myself close to the ninth part of a man, who was sitting in the orthodox fashion of members of his craft, cross-legged on a table, and shoeless, stitching away at some garment.

Putting on my blandest manner, I proceeded to lay before him the object of my visit, stating generally that I took an interest in anything connected with coaching in past days, and that having been told that he was an old inhabitant of the place, and his daughter also, as I have mentioned, I had taken the liberty of calling on him to have a chat, and help pass away the long time I had to spend in the village.

He seemed somewhat incredulous, not to say suspicious, and in answer to any inquiry I made of him, generally replied by a question to myself.

The appearance of the daughter I thought rather a relief, and I endeavoured to divert the conversation from him; but he kept cutting in with questions, and seemed fearful that I should elicit from her some information, or that she would give some answers which were undesirable, so I was almost compelled to include him again, and when I did not succeed in procuring a satisfactory reply from him, make an occasional appeal to the daughter.

I, however, so far succeeded that I got him fairly into conversation about the place, and the roads running through it, especially as he found I had some previous personal acquaintance with them; but I soon discovered that he was not much, if at all, better informed than myself, and the daughter could not give much help, so that his silencing her by his own running commentaries and interruptions was immaterial. As he still seemed so suspicious as to the motive of my inquiries, it occurred to me that I could lose nothing, but might have some little fun out of him, by being rather more mysterious.

I discovered conclusively that as to anything relating to the coaches his statements were quite incorrect—I do not mean intentionally, but that, possibly from imperfect recollection, he was not a reliable source of information in any respect whatever.

Although our interview had lasted for some time

(as I thought I might as well sit there as wander about in the road), he still was evidently unconvinced as to my wishing to know about the road and things connected with it solely as a matter of interest, and he continually kept letting fly at me with 'But why did I want to know?' 'What was it for?' etc. My most positive assurances as to the plain and simple object I had in view utterly failed to satisfy him, as appeared when, after our long chat, he wound up, much to my amusement, with this observation:

'Well, but how do I know? perhaps you might be one of those inquiry men.'

I was so struck with the observation that I have never forgotten it, but have often regretted since that I did not ask what he meant by the expression 'inquiry men,' as I have not the slightest notion, and can only suppose that it must have referred to persons who had perhaps been making inquiries in the place for the purpose of some railway undertaking.

Although I failed in increasing my stock of information, I passed away an hour, more agreeably than by hanging about in the village. My companion was very civil, and by no means an unfavourable specimen of the ninth part of a man.

Intimating that he had probably found it rather dry work talking so long, I adopted the course usual on such occasions, and we parted on the best terms,

although I feel certain he was as thoroughly distrustful of the object of my visit as ever, and I have no doubt on the return of his daughter, whom he despatched to procure the remedy for his complaint, they had a long gossip over me and the meeting, and discussed at length the visit of the mysterious stranger; and indeed I should not be surprised if I was the subject of conversation at one of the village public-houses in the evening, where he attended. Could I have been among the droppers-in, I might have found some other old dwellers in the place from whom I could have picked up something; but I had to leave soon after my interview with the tailor, and certainly did not regret my departure, for a small country village in depressed circumstances is not quite the place one would select to spend even a few hours in.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE noticed how our old parochial highways used to be managed, and the alterations which have been made in the system; but how far these alterations taken throughout the kingdom have been advantageous in point of economy—keeping the highways in as efficient a state of repair at a smaller expense—has certainly in some localities been doubtful; there are instances where highway boards have been dissolved, and some other mode of managing the roads has subsequently been resorted to.

With regard to the question of repair, I doubt very much if the country roads are in better order now than they used to be before highway boards were instituted. As to their present condition, one could probably gain a good deal of information from the numerous body of bicycle and tricycle riders by whom they are so much used; but then, again, very few of the riders, I take it, are old enough to be able to give much information from practical knowledge and

J. Sturgess del. et lith.

LEADERS FLEW OUT OF THE ROAD IN AN INSTANT.

experience of what these roads were before highway boards were formed, now more than twenty years since.

The abolition of the turnpikes, combining the main roads with the parochial highways, and then the contribution from the Consolidated Fund of some portion of the expenses of maintaining the main roads, renders the pecuniary result to that heavily burthened individual so extensively known as the ratepayer, an arithmetical question of considerable nicety. Rates are now made for so many purposes besides poor, highway, and church rates, which used to comprise all those for which they were levied in strictly rural districts, that one can scarcely wonder that many people show very great repugnance to paying them, consoling themselves with the only available resource they have for giving vent to their feelings by abusing the unfortunate collector—as if he were in any way responsible for the imposition of the rates!

I once, however, heard of a different and milder course pursued by an elderly man, who, being summoned before a bench of magistrates for non-payment of his rate, informed them that he had bought the houses to pay him a certain percentage, and that if he had to pay the rates his rents would not be sufficient to realize his contemplated income. It is

needless, perhaps, to state that the magistrates in the discharge of their judicial duty could not adopt this gentleman's view of his position.

With regard to the turnpike roads, we have seen what was done for them by such men as McAdam and Telford, and how their scientific knowledge and labours so much improved them that fast travelling could take place along them, and the days of fast coaches commenced—a thing totally impracticable previously.

Their reign was not very long, as the iron road came into use with rapid strides, and in a very summary manner abolished traffic along the highways, and reduced them to such a condition for want of funds arising from tolls, that, as I have mentioned, the plan of throwing the maintenance of them on the parishes was resorted to, with a contribution from the Consolidated Fund towards the expenses.

I have endeavoured to give some sketches of the principal men connected with the business of travelling, such as coach-proprietors and innkeepers, and the mode in which their business was carried on, and also to make some mention of other indispensable persons, such as their coachmen and guards.

Most of the persons and things of which I have treated have ceased to exist, as: The mail-pro-

prietors; coach-proprietors; mails; coaches; post-chaises; post-boys; coachmen; guards; coach-porters; coach-offices; coaching-stables down the roads; turnpikes, and of course with them the quiet and inoffensive dwellers in small roadside cottages, known as pike-keepers, both male and female. All were swept away by the irresistible march of the railways. Few, except men like Chaplin and Horne, escaped being carried down, and it was as one has read in an old combination of English and dog-Latin, the author of which I don't know: 'Omnes drownderunt swim away qui non potuerunt.' Almost all that remains now of 'the road' is its memory.

All these changes have taken place in little over forty years, and supposing for a moment that railway-travelling had never been effected, it appears difficult to imagine how we could have got about. We are now accustomed to take a journey of a hundred miles in about three hours, in an enclosed carriage protected against all weather, for the small sum of 8s. 4d.; whereas in the days of 'the road' it took eleven or twelve hours or more, at an expense of nearly a pound for the fare only, on the outside of a coach.

Taking into consideration the people who travel on business only, much perhaps might be transacted

by correspondence which is now done by personal interview; but then again, how would all the letters be conveyed without the railway mail-vans? These are problems which, being unable to solve, I may as well give up in despair, and bring to a conclusion the work on 'the road' by

'An Old Stager.'

THE END.

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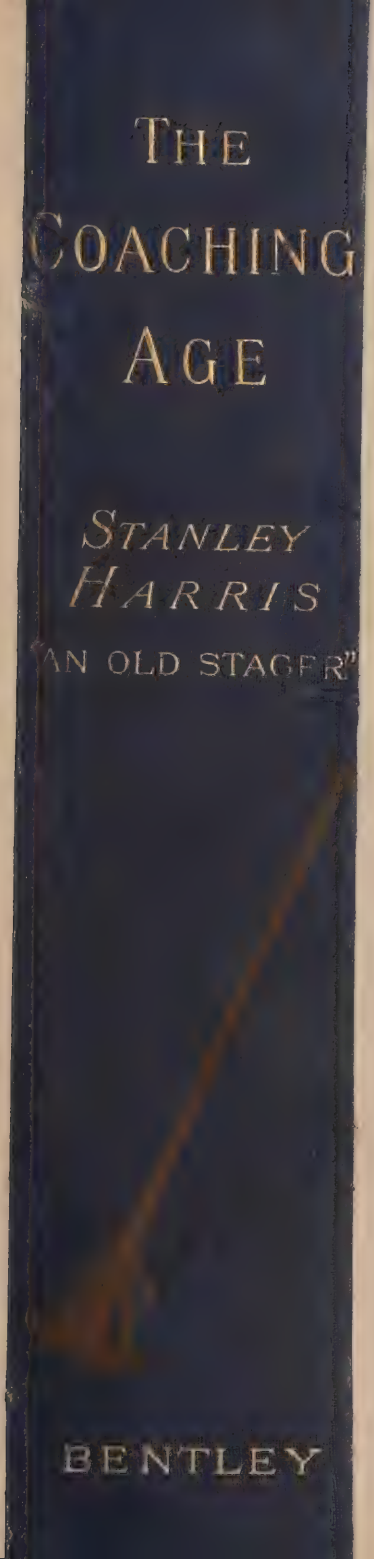

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